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Chapter 250

In , Aristotle defined tragedy as representing men “as better than in actual life” and comedy as “representing men as worse”.

The opera is the closest art form to classic Greek tragedies in format, and the ruin of a noble and elegant is the most complete tragedy.

The argument that lasted over 2000 years of boundaries drawn between tragedy and comedy in the history of western culture of opera buffa (comedy) or seria (tragedy) argument came crashing down with Mozart’s Don Giovanni.

Don Giovanni freely surpassed that boundary and formally used the title opera buffa to mock and break apart human relationships to expose tragedy.

Jun Hyuk’s opera ‘Godfather’ did not hesitate to use elements of total tragedy, but he made all of the characters into normal people, not people who are better or worse.

A group of people working toward their ambitions. They are modern people, not those of tragedy or comedy.

He also used a dissonance method of song and acting to take the pole in verismo (extreme realism) opera.

“I don’t know about singing. I’m telling you to express your spirited determination with just song. Don’t overdo it with serious expressions for no reason. You need to kill the person in front of you, but will that person stay still if all of that shows on your face? Make your expression temperate. Okay?”

The director in charge of acting kept shouting in order to suppress the exaggerated action of operas. He emphasized elegance and moderation in order to bring out the dry and composed mafia of movies.

Star class singers, who had only heard praises until now, were not comfortable with these stinging words.

This is the first time they needed to sing an exploding aria with plain expressions, so

it was a difficult period for even those with confidence in their abilities to act.

“What is this? Why is the sound going down? Are you filming a movie right now? Are you reciting a dialogue? You need to sing!”

When singing with a plain expression as requested by the director, Jun Hyuk started yelling.

They still have the shock that they felt when they first received the script. The first thing they thought of was Mozart. Before Mozart, all dialogue in operas were not made in song.

There were a lot of normal parts that were as though in dialogue, but Mozart put his thought that ‘music should always be flowing’ in his operas.

They were complete banquets of music, that the singers even complained that there were too many songs that made it too difficult for them to perform.

Jun Hyuk’s opera does not fall short in any way when compared to those of Mozart.

It is packed with songs, so that it feels like an endless feast of arias. They thought it a relief that it was just 3 acts.

But between these 2 directors who are telling them to act like Hollywood actors and sing with the essence of Italian operas, it was hard for cast members to endure each day. But time did not care and passed fleetingly.

Two days before the performance, Laura flew to Milan from Frankfurt and finished rehearsals fastest. She is a supporting character who just sings 2 songs and unlike the other characters, her role is the only one where the songs and acting are aligned.

The cast members who listened to her sing could not deny that Laura would develop another level again.

“You’ve worked hard until now.”

Jun Hyuk, the acting director, and staff members bowed to the singers and orchestra.

Acting, singing, frequently changing lights, stage equipment, and sound effects. This is a genuine gesture toward the cast members who tossed their images as stars and did

their best in order to implement an opera where all of this falls together perfectly.

All of the cast members went to Jun Hyuk and embraced him with strength. Dario Argento in particular even showed a tear in his eye as he held Jun Hyuk in his arms.

“Thank you, Jun. For giving me the chance to spend the last of my life in such a grand manner. Thanks a lot.”

This work has the special effects of musical “Love and Soul”, the narrative of “Les Miserables”, and the magnificence of “Turandot”, and the opera singers could not stop their beating hearts with the work’s opening tomorrow.



That day, it is not an exaggeration to say that all of the reporters in Milan gathered.

“Godfather” actors including Al Pacino, Robert DeNiro, Robert Duvall, James Caan, and director Francis Ford Coppola came in for this and and documentary director Martin Scorsese was busy filming their arrival.

Hollywood stars praised the opera “Godfather” with anticipation that it would continue the legend of the movie they filmed 40 years ago.

Maestros who know and those who have never met Jun Hyuk before pushed in endlessly, and singers who had not been cast along with their die-hard fans paid the expensive airfare to get to Milan.

All of the stars entering the theater needed to talk in front of cameras and microphones for over 10 minutes. The person who did not fall short in any way when compared to these stars in front of the cameras was Yoon Kwang Hun, who entered with President Stern and Tara.

Reporters considered Yoon Kwang Hun the father of today’s star, Jun Hyuk, and kept asking him questions. Of them, there were those who mistook him for Jun Hyuk’s biological father and asked when Jun Hyuk’s talent started to show.

“Isn’t it time you get used to it? A star’s family is inevitably exposed to camera flashes. Ha ha.”

President Stern whispered to a flustered Yoon Kwang Hun and Yoon Kwang Hun responded to interviews with a trembling voice. He became more and more stable, and started to enjoy the flashing cameras in a relaxed state.

The front of La Scala Theater was like the Academy Awards red carpet, and received the world's attention.



Everyone who prepared for today's performance with Dario Argento at the center gathered and prayed to perform safely and successfully, and orchestra members went into the theater first.

The audience's murmuring stopped when the lights went down. Everyone held their breaths as they waited for the conductor to enter.

The 18th century opera theater was a place where noble ladies could bring their dogs. 'Dog accompaniment' was allowed by society.

Since they could not dim the lights to quiet the audience as is done now, the atmosphere was not much different from that of the streets.

That is why they needed a device to tell the audience that the opera was starting, and that was the 'overture'.

Before the opera's curtains really rose, the light overture was called a 'sinfonia' and that is how the history of the symphony we enjoy today began.

The only light was a small ray that lit up the scores for the orchestra right under the stage.

Clapping started from the very front of the audience and spread out throughout the entire theater. They had discovered Jun Hyuk, the conductor, walking out quietly among the orchestra members.

He bowed to the audience and held up his hand in response to the applause, and then raised his baton high.

As soon as the baton started moving, there was a low exclamation from the audience.

The music of Nino Rota that they have heard so much. It is the movie Godfather's main theme song.

Jun Hyuk was only thinking of using this song as an intermezzo, but everyone related to the box office convinced him to do otherwise.

When they emphasized the emotion and immersion that people would feel when music that they are used to comes out, Jun Hyuk also accepted it. He could not deny that the movie's main theme song is great.

After the overture and before the curtain rose, 2 gunshots rang through the theater.

Then, a woman's shriek.

"Oh! My son, Paolo!"

Paolo had been swearing revenge at his father's funeral when he was murdered by Francesco Ciccio's underlings. Whether one saw the movie or not, anyone could tell that Paolo had been shot to death.

As the curtain slowly rose, there was a man sitting on a rocking chair in the middle of the stage. His face was full of arrogance, as though he dominates over this entire village.

He is the boss, Francesco Ciccio, who cannot wear a belt because of his full stomach and is wearing a shoulder strap. A woman is begging with her head down, below his arrogant feet.

The violins' tender melody began and when the oboes and clarinets intensified this, the woman with her face in the ground, Laura Goldberg, stood up. Tears were already flowing down her face.

The violins and violas worked together to play a melody of a lamented atmosphere. Then, the cello followed in. As these 2 melodies crossed and changed, the introduction was flowing.

With a darkening melody and the violas and cellos left in the background as if mumbling, Laura's heavy and deafening aria began.

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Don Ciccio, I ask you in tears.

As the Lord did Magdalena, have pity on us.

I am just a widow,

And he is a young child smaller than an olive.

Please protect your noble honor

And protect a young child's life.

Please tell me.

That you will save

Such a miserable mother and son.

A mother's cry to save her son, filled the theater. A few emotional people were already taking out their handkerchiefs to wipe away their tears.

Laura's song ended and the 2nd aria's music flowed out. Don Ciccio stood up without a word and turned his back to her.

His turning his back indicates his cruel intention to ignore the mother's earnest wish and kill her other son.

When the tune went up an octave and expressed urgency, Vito Corleone's mother, Laura, took a dagger out from her chest and pointed it at Don Ciccio's neck.

The orchestra hit the bass with the love, anger, and despair of a mother trying to save her son. That moment of passion and the orchestra, that felt like it was smothering the person listening, were used as a foothold and another of Laura's arias began.

Oh Lord, I am holding a knife

To the neck of this pig

Who killed my husband and son.

When I think of the pain he has caused me

My heart pledges revenge

But when I think of the danger facing my son

My heart wavers again.

It is a song that expresses the feeling of being at a crossroads for choice. A song is a better method of expressing one's feelings than practical dialogue is.

Another of Laura's emotional arias came to an end, and the audience could not suppress their sentiments and exploded in applause. This is the moment where the actress and conductor need to match up.

They cannot make it seem like the flow has been cut off by the sound of the audience clapping. Laura took a glance at Jun Hyuk's baton, and let out a big cry when the baton moved again instead of singing.

"Corsa (run) Vito. Corsa!"

The sound of a child running came out through the speakers and gunshots sounded again. The stage grew darker as Laura clutched her chest and collapsed, and Ciccio's underlings yelled after Vito.

The stage did not brighten because of the lights. The lights on the screens taking up the 3 sides of the stage came on, and the scenery of New York in the 1910s filled the screens.

People walking quickly, a street with horse carriages and cars. It is a New York street where gentlemen wearing top hats and Italian immigrants with impressive mustaches live together.

The young Vito Corleone escaped Ciccio's bright eyes to New York, and had become a young man in his 20s.

He is gazing at infant Michael Corleone lovingly, and his wife Carmela is smiling next to him.

The two of them sang solos and duets for 15 minutes without rest. They are living in poverty, but they endure it with their love for each other and scrape by, drawing out the image of immigrants.

Three-fourths of the way through the overall dark atmosphere, 2 contrabasses brought out the theme and started to mix in with the two people's songs.

With young passion

My heart is burning like fire

What gave me comfort

Was only the smile of love!

From the day he whispered

In my ear that he loves me,

The moments I am with you

Are like heaven.

I live in heaven.

This moment that I am spending with you,

I am living in heaven.

When his wife Carmela's song ended, her seemingly sickly husband Vito Corleone sang. At that moment, low exclamations of pity came out from all over the audience.

He is one of the young first-class tenors but his voice did not have strength, technique, or high-frequency.

It is just a rather soft lyricism. He showed that he is just someone of lower class in New York where he is living without power or money.

One day,

You shined a light on me.

From that day on,

I came to live in great love.

A wave of great love

Came over me.

I'll give you happiness

And take the pain and sadness myself.

Their duet continued without rest. The orchestra accompaniment also continued along with the faithful lyrics and songs.

My happy days

Are all because of you.

Everything is empty without you.

The joy of love disappears in a moment,

Flowers bloom beautifully,

When the moment passes,

They do not bloom again.

Feel great happiness

While our lives are burning.

The beautiful melody was enough to take over people's souls and whispered to the audience, a love full of gentleness and affection.

As soon as the opera began, Laura's tragic aria flowed out and the beautiful serenade of love continued to flow out as a duet, and the audience was already mesmerized, unable to take their eyes off the stage.

Vito Corleone became unemployed because of Don Fanucci, the area's boss. He met Peter Clemenza by chance after that, and went into the dark path with Salvatore Tessio.

The cello and contrabass played with a heavy and solemn feeling. Continuing, there was the violin's somehow nervous and chopped accompaniment, and woodwinds played a sad melody.

As though foreshadowing Vito's future in which he cannot live normally under the sun, the tenor and baritone in the orchestra's sad music went on continuously.

The stage's background changed within moments with just the screen and lights. An empty house robbed from the street, a coffee shop in a New York alley appeared and disappeared.

The background switched so quickly that it was difficult to determine whether they were watching an opera or a movie. The audience could not stop admiring how the sound effects, orchestra, and singers mixed together without a single error.

A rare few knew that all of this began from the end of the white baton that Jun Hyuk is holding.

The gunshot that rang when he assassinated Don Fanucci, this street's boss, went along with the timpani's sounding and embedded in the ears of the audience as if an instrument and Vito Corleone's image gradually changed.

He showed confidence and his voice was no longer sickly or weak. He was an image fit for the dominator of New York streets and he had taken his first step into the mafia family looking out for Italians. When the sign of ghost company 'Genco Trading Company' went up, more than 20 singers gleefully sang a song, 'Ruler of the Street'.

When the pleasant woodwinds melody stopped, the cello sang the 2nd theme. The chorus' joy and cello's gloom intertwined, and the song showed the last development right before exploding.

At some point, New York changed into Vito Corleone's hometown and the chorus

changed into Don Ciccio's underlings.

When an old Don Ciccio rubs his dull eyes and looks at the young Vito Corleone, the orchestra's swelling music explodes.

Jun Hyuk put all of his strength into bringing out the climax with his baton, and the young hero showed all of his true skill, power, technique, and range to explode with Jun Hyuk.

Revenge

Approaches like sweet wine.

Revenge

Will be stuck in my flesh

Like a bitter olive seed.

A sweet revenge for me

A sharp blade for you.

The knife in my hand

That will cut open an old pig's stomach.

You will have to spill more blood

Than my father, mother, and brother spilled.

Your children and wife will have to fill

The blood that falls short.

When Vito Corleone cut from Don Ciccio's chest to stomach, blood splattered and Don Ciccio's guts spilled out through special effects. When the overall color of the stage was stained red, there were even sharp shrieks from the audience.

But the young avenger's song continued without a single rest.

Oh, mother.

Are you looking at this blood-stained blade?

Do you see his bowels, cut open on this blade?

Rest peacefully now.

Your son will protect you forever.

While the bloody tenor holding a blade wet with blood boasted an explosive voice overwhelming the audience, the stage grew dark again.

The audience could not accept the fact that the 1st act ended in shock and emotion.

They finally exploded in applause once the word 'intermission' came up on the stage screen.

Robert DeNiro in particular had been watching the actor who handled the role he had when he was younger, was not even able to stand up as he was moved to tears rather than applauding.



When the 2nd act came up, Dario Argento as 55 year old Vito Corleone and his daughter Connie Corleone were dancing on stage.

It is the highlight of the wedding reception, the bride and father's dance.

Joyful noises of the wedding came out through the speakers and this bumbling melted into the orchestra's music as though it were just a part of the music.

People appeared one by one near the two people dancing until they were no longer visible.

Connie Corleone disappeared from the stage as though by magic, and the dancing floor changed into the boss' office.

Vito Corleone, his guest, and his underlings sang in low tones.

He is directing mafia related violence such as with undertaker Bonasera crying out singing for the murder of his daughter's attacker, and producer Jack Woltz, who refused Johnny Fontane's appearance in film, being put in his place.

As conductor, Jun Hyuk's attention did not stray from Dario Argento. When the voice that Jun Hyuk had demanded, the old and thick yet weighty voice, added on to the orchestra's melody to fill the stage, Jun Hyuk let out a sigh of relief.

Contrary to Jun Hyuk's relief however, the audience even felt strange about this completely different voice that sounded as if it were scratching on metal.

For people who had been waiting for the tenor's clear sound, the introduction to Argento's 'Irrefusable Proposal' is music that they cannot hear in operas.

This song reaching 6 minutes 30 seconds is still a minor song, but it is deployed powerfully with a configuration that changes frequently between B major and G major.

Argento showed the skill of handling the bouncing modulation perfectly, and his thick voice was overall dark and heavy. He took care of all impediments with that heaviness and showed his strong will to achieve his purpose.

When the song was over, only non-Italians had expressions of surprise.

Argento's voice is only an Italian's aria, and ties the song and meaning together perfectly.

When Corleone got into a shootout on the street with the Tattaglia family over drug matters and Vito Corleone was in danger of dying, he started singing 'Oh, What a Shame! How Embarrassing' with regret.

I have made a big mistake!

Faith of friendship in vain,

Not a shameful belief

Is just an unscrupulous dream.

I have been too comfortable.

Oh, how can I

Correct this mistake?

I need to wash away this disgrace.

Oh, how shameful! This is embarrassing.

While the 2nd act went towards the end, Al Pacino's expression from the 2nd floor VIP seats was not good.

It is because the scene in the movie where he pulled the trigger against his father's enemies in a small restaurant and escaped to Sicily, which was crucial and dramatic in the film, was reduced to just one song and the orchestra's fast tempo music.

Those underhanded Tattaglias... I won't forgive you.

I will get revenge before the day ends.

I need to see blood. My body trembles in rage.

All that is left is rage!

I'll kill the traitors like dogs

And throw them out on the ground!

Hyenas will gnaw up their bones and flesh

So there is not even a trace of them left behind.

New York, frozen in the winter wind

Will be overcome with a gruesome silence!

It was evident that Michael Corleone, the young son who led the movie 'Godfather' and the role he took on, was minimal and the opera followed Dario Argento's view.

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The 3rd act showed what quintessential stage effects really are. The war between 5 New York families with the blade of revenge and drug business before them showed excitement beyond that in movies.

The confused image of citizens on the street, avoiding the terror of this war, was shown via video and their movements and the actors on stage created a perfect balance.

It was to the point where the audience could think that the actors spent more time practicing their timing than they did on rehearsing their songs.

Shots from the endlessly sounding automatic rifle surpassed sound effects and mixed in with the woodwinds as though a new percussion instrument, and the verbal argument between family executives surpassed Mozart's techniques to provide a chorus of comic relief.

Vito Corleone rose from his sickbed and arranged peace talks between New York's 5 families, which resulted in the end of the war.

The 3rd act, which was the shortest, was trying to end the long journey with one person's death.

The image of a young grandson running around and playing, implemented through a hologram, looked like an apparition to the audience and 64 year old Vito Corleone chased that apparition around while laughing joyfully.

However, he soon grabbed at the left side of his chest and came to a stop, feeling his stopping heart and sang his last song full of sorrow.

Oh, Lord!

A life full of sin is dying!

Oh, my trust and hope

All of this was just a dream.

My heart, my long faith.

All of it was a waste!

Happiness and all pain will disappear.

The tomb of death with end everything!

I can no longer water this wilting flower

And only the cross on this bell tower is looking at me!

Oh, this wasted body, forgive me.

Look down on my poor soul!

It is all over now.....

As though trying to show that the opera's last song is the last song of his life, Dario Argento sang passionately with all of his strength.

It seemed like the tempo was wavering because he got lost in emotion, but he did not care. He sang faithfully to his feelings.

Jun Hyuk followed this shaking tempo exactly in order to light up this great's last stage, and led the orchestra.

It is exactly 5 minutes.

When these 5 minutes are over, the opera and Argento are La Fin (The End).

The two people on and below the stage did their best.

And 5 minutes passed.

A silence without music or singing dominated the theater, and all of the lights went out.

It felt like darkness and silence would press on 'La Scala' forever.

The slow lowering of the heavy curtain notified the end of the performance, but no one moved.

Below the stage, Jun Hyuk came down from the podium and quietly left first, while the orchestra members followed suit backstage.

With the bustling sound of the members moving backstage, a storm of clapping and cheering exploded.

And their faces are wet.

If possible, operas are often embellished with chorus finales. Ending with magnificent music is the best way to leave the audience with the greatest emotion.

However, it ended with a tenor's song screaming in sadness.

The audience can only hold on to a sad sorrow instead of intense emotion. Their tears were expressing that sadness.

Cast members smiled brightly with the following curtain call, entering the stage one by one, and Dario Argento entered last.

The audience's cheering grew louder and a new cry was added in.

"Bravo! Don Argento! Bravo!"

Argento was a perfect big boss to the Italians in the audience. It was the success story of a young immigrant from Sicily who came to dominate New York. His death was natural, but it is a pity that there is still business to complete.

And the audience is not stupid. They are people who love the opera.

They realized that Dario Argento had handled an immense amount of practice in order to express a perfect Vito Corleone, and had purposefully made his voice sound rough.

They do not know how many times this show will be performed, but they could also guess that this is the last time that they are hearing Dario Argento's beautiful and elegant voice with Vito Corleone's end.

It is because that roughly transformed voice cannot be applied to any of Dario Argento's other roles.

The audience clapped expressively for the old tenor who would remain as the eternal Godfather Don Vito Corleone.

Lastly, the old and young Vito Corleone embraced Jun Hyuk as he walked out slowly.

"Viva! Jun!"

Before he could even bow to the audience, applause for him exploded.

The cheer 'viva' instead of 'bravo' is their way of showing respect to Jun Hyuk. A feast of an aria that contains Italy's essence. At this moment, Jun Hyuk is the audience's Verdi, Puccini.

After several endless curtain calls that they could no longer respond to, the theater speakers played the movie's main theme 'Parla piu piano'. It was a gesture to the audience to leave the theater while listening to the music, but not a single person left their seat.

People finally began to leave once the theme song ended.

Reporters were camped out waiting outside the theater. They were just waiting for stars to come out in order to get interviews from those with the closest relationships to this opera.

The first person that reporters held their microphones out to was the director of movie 'Godfather,' Francis Ford Coppola. The director is the only person who they can speak about the opera in comparison with, since the original novelist has passed away.

"I had goosebumps the whole time I watched it. The music? Direction? Singing? Of course all of this was absolutely amazing, but the most surprising aspect while watching this opera was Maestro Jun's sharp eye digging into the characters. It is surprising that he analyzed Vito Corleone and Mr. Argento's character so closely."

Director Coppola gave his composed thoughts on Jun Hyuk.

"He did not capture the mafia's politics or war, but a single person. Before calling Maestro Jun a great, I felt like he is an observer."

Al Pacino, who had been the main character in the movie, laid on the praise but he did not hide his disappointment.

“Maestro Jun created another opera for Michael Corleone’s life. Before I even die. Ha ha.”

“I hope more aren’t made. This friend can’t come out better. I wish people would be satisfied with me.”

Robert DeNiro smiled into the camera toward Al Pacino with a fully satisfied expression.



While the cast members were holding their champagne flutes high, celebrating the successful performance and recognizing each other’s toil, the singers’ managers, theater officials, and the performance promotion company were gathered to discuss the follow-up plans to this successful performance.

“It does feel a bit early, but can’t we start discussing additional performances?”

President Stern is this performance’s top investor and producer. Additional performances is referring to those that would be opened once leaving Milan’s La Scala, in other cities and countries.

He had already finalized contracts with several places, but they always included a last condition that the final decision would be made after the first performance.

The decision will be made with the evaluation once all of Milan’s performances are over, but if they consider the reaction of today’s audience or the criticism that will fall tomorrow, it is not a decision to rush even if it is a huge success.

“Twice a week, for a total of 10 performances. This is Mr. Argento’s condition, but have you confirmed to see if he intends to continue?”

“Yes. There is no change in his decision to retire after the Milan performances.”

Argento’s manager did not hesitate even for a moment in responding to President Stern’s question.

“How is Maestro Jun?”

“This is the same for him. The Milan performances will be the last in which he conducts himself. Every opera house has a great orchestra and conductor anyway. And there will be preparations being made to perform the Godfather opera as a symphony right about now.”

The others’ expressions were not bright in response to President Stern’s positive answer.

The original cast is collapsing after just 10 performances.

And it is the 2 most important people who are busy, the conductor and main character.

As President Stern said, the conductor can be replaced at any time. But Argento, the main character? Who could reproduce his rough tone in his place?

Everyone was frustrated, but no one could blame Argento. He publicly announced that this would be the last performance of his music career, so they cannot beg him to extend his performances.

“First, take a look at this.”

Names filled the sheet of paper that President Stern held out.

“Choose one of these tenors who would be able to handle Vito Corleone’s role. I will take responsibility for signing them on.”

The officials looked over the tenor list and went into a heated debate. Such a great performance is something that might or might not appear once every 10 years. And it is sure to have a long run that they cannot see the end to yet.

The show must go on.

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The short but powerful evaluation of Jun Hyuk in Italy's influential daily newspaper, 'La Repubblica,' said everything.

The view of Jun Hyuk changed after the opera. Now, no one glares at the work that Jun Hyuk releases. Instead, they are full of anticipation for what Jun Hyuk will start from now on and what other surprising image he will show them.

It felt like a festival was being held twice every week in Milan. Once it became known that Jun Hyuk and Argento would only perform in these 10 shows, all famous people trying to see it used all possible methods and contacts to acquire tickets.

One Italian soccer player even posted on Twitter that he is willing to pay \$100,000 for a ticket.

In the midst of all this, Yoon Kwang Hun was the only person with the honor of watching all 10 performances. However, someone appeared who he had no choice but to give up his last 2 tickets to.

Amelia had announced that she would be resting for 1 year as soon as her sponsor contracts expired. She quickly came over to Milan and took away Yoon Kwang Hun's tickets.

"Daddy. You already saw it 8 times. You can give 2 to me."

When the Milan performances were over, President Stern took the cast and producers to Rome. The 2nd round of performances began after 2 weeks and they needed to go around the Europe area for 6 months.

Jun Hyuk wanted to hurry up and have a sweet and relaxing time with Amelia, but he could not leave Milan. He still has work to do.

"There's one more thing I need to do before I leave Milan."

"What is it?"

“An advertisement shoot.”

“Advertisement?”

“Didn’t I tell you before? Was it around the time of the concert Seoul? I said there was a big deal as an exclusive model.”

“Oh, I remember. It was some car advertisement, right?”

“Yeah. Aston Martin, a British sports car.”

Yoon Kwang Hun and Amelia’s eyes grew wide at the name Aston Martin. It seems the conditions were pretty good from Tara’s bright expression.

“It’s actually a British brand, but a private equity in Italy took over it. They considered for a bit over the modeling fee, but the opera was the decisive factor. Fund investors saw the opera and signed the contract.”

When they were first negotiating the contract, even Tara thought that President Stern was demanding too much. But thinking of the money that Jun Hyuk makes now, it made her think that it was too little.

“Anyway, it’s a 2 year exclusive contract. 4 photoshoots. 2 advertisement filmings. Of course the modeling fee will come in 4 installments.

“How much is the modeling fee?”

Yoon Kwang Hun asked cautiously and Tara laughed heartily.

“It’s similar to Tom Cruise’s fee to film a movie. What do you think? Isn’t it incredible?”

“What? Tom Cruise’s guarantee?”

Even Amelia who had been listening casually, could not hide her surprise and bolted up from her seat. She heard that Tom Cruise makes about \$40 million per film. But with an advertisement? She thought of the money she makes in a year spent in planes and cars to handle a tight tour schedule. It was difficult to even calculate how many times the difference was.

“Yeah. It’s really a big shot.”

Tara thought of the words 'big shot' and shook her head.

"Oh, that's not it. It's not a big shot considering Jun's royalties right now."

"Why me? For that money, Tom Cruise would come running too."

"Their target is the young and rich in Asia. I'm sure they want to bring in the rich who are fawning over Porsches and Lamborghinis."

"That means we truly can't get over this ethnic wall. Does that mean that I, as an Asian, am not appealing globally?"

"What are you talking about? Don't take it the wrong way."

Tara quickly waved her hand.

"Aston Martin is Bond's car."

"Bond's car? Oh, 007?"

"Yeah. The 007 Bond edition is plenty of advertisement in the global market. This is a special case. With such a tremendous fee, they can choose any Hollywood star or sports star, but they chose you."

Tara recalled the negotiation table where they created the tremendous guarantee.

"Oh right, they signed willingly because of what Isaac said at the end of negotiations."

"What did he say?"

"4 photoshoots and 2 advertisement filmings is over at least a week in total turnaround time... but 1 week is enough time for Jun to create 7 albums. There's no reason for him to shoot the advertisement when thinking of his album sales and royalties."

Everyone laughed, but Tara continued to look serious.

"It's true. There's no reason to shoot the advertisement. We considered it a lot before we decided on it too because of his image."

“Image?”

“Yeah. Jun’s image has been made too much into that of a hermit. So we’re trying to make him more of an active young genius.”

Yoon Kwang Hun had been listening quietly when he could not hold back his curiosity.

“But what’s the model?”

“Oh yes. It’s the Aston Martin Vanquish Volante. Of course he’ll receive a model vehicle as a bonus.”

“So it’s a convertible since it’s the Volante.”

The convertible sports car that James Bond drives. Yoon Kwang Hun blinked.

Jun Hyuk smiled at this. This is the person who taught him what a Ducati bike is. Since he is someone who thinks more of design than performance, he will already know the car lineup.

“Sir. Throw that junk car away now and ride a Bond car.”

Even with an account with tens of millions of dollars, he is someone who does not even take a single dollar out to use. But he is sure to accept a car that he wants – especially one that is free. And Jun Hyuk was not wrong.

Yoon Kwang Hun was already smiling from ear to ear.

Yoon Kwang Hun laughed at Jun Hyuk’s Korean. Tara and Amelia watched their faces in curiosity, so Jun Hyuk told them.

“Tara. It’ll be work, but make it so we can receive that bonus car in Korea.”

The 2 people finally realized why Yoon Kwang Hun was smiling, and burst out in laughter.

“Okay. That’s not hard. It’s okay.”

Tara checked their schedule and looked happy.

“You’re going to Napoli tomorrow to film, and the studio shoot will be in New York. You can go directly to New York from Napoli... Do you want to take about a week’s break? It’s not that busy.”

Amelia was happiest with what Tara said. There isn’t anywhere in Europe that she has not been because of her concerts, but it had all been work. There would be nothing better than to be able to spend a relaxing time with Jun Hyuk.

“That sounds good. Oh right. Is Sicily far from Napoli?”

“It’s not that far. Sicily is in southernmost Italy... so about an hour and a half by plane?”

“Then let’s go to Sicily. It’s the mafia’s hometown. I made a mafia opera, so shouldn’t I try visiting it?”

“No. There’s something more famous in Sicily than the mafia.”

Yoon Kwang Hun had been laughing when he spoke up quietly.

“For Sicily... it’s the food.”

It is not an exaggeration to say that Sicilian cuisine is representative of Italian food. In the west, Sicily is even called “God’s kitchen”.

Sicily is influenced by Greek, African, and Arabic ingredients due to its geographical factors and complex history, and has come to establish its own style. This was introduced to Italy and becomes the root of Italian cuisine.

It is particularly famous as the origin of pasta, from the saffron of the Arab world to the tomato from the New World, many foods symbolic of Italy were first implemented in Sicily.

Tara listened to Yoon Kwang Hun’s explanation and looked at him in fascination.

“Mr. Yoon. I’ve felt this from before, but you’re like an encyclopedia.”

Jun Hyuk laughed at Tara’s admiration of Yoon Kwang Hun.

“What he does all day at the cafe is listen to music and watch documentaries. National Geographic and Discovery are the channels that taught him that vast knowledge. He

he.”

Yoon Kwang Hun’s look of satisfaction quickly flushed.



Napoli, a long coastal road following the Mediterranean with stunning scenery and a lot of cultural heritage, is called one of the world’s 3 greatest harbors along with Australia’s Sydney, Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro.

Jun Hyuk filmed on that coastal road and harbor, going back and forth from the island of Capri from sunrise to sunset, unable to even count how many cuts they had done.

The 4 people spent their time leisurely once their work was done, looking around Napoli and Sicily. They enjoyed a relaxing time eating, drinking, and talking like in the movie ‘Eat Pray Love’.

Yoon Kwang Hun went back to Korea with the excitement of receiving an Aston Martin. Jun Hyuk and Amelia, who went back to New York, forgot about music and enjoyed their long-needed break.

Amelia in particular spent more than half her days in bed as though determined to reward herself for the busy way she had spent the last few years.

When the two people were about to spend the year at home, President Stern and a few employees came to Jun Hyuk’s apartment.

Chapter 254

“Isaac. Why are you here instead of the operas?”

“Oh, it’s okay. The performing team is entirely settled. We’re done with the shows in Italy, including the ones in Rome. I saw them off to Germany, so there’s no problem even if I’m not there. Our employees are always with them, so they’ll contact me if there are any problems.”

The recordings of Jun Hyuk’s opera ‘Godfather’ are selling out every day and is trying to reach record breaking sales. Once the European performances are over, there is a tight schedule waiting for them in North America.

“And once the world tour is over, we’re going to work on the album and film with the original cast. We’ve already finished discussing it with Mr. Argento. He wants to leave a record of his last work. Jun, that’s okay, right?”

“Of course. We have to do Argento’s last work together.”

“But you haven’t come all the way here with your employees to talk about that, have you?”

Amelia blinked her sleepy eyes and put coffee down on the living room table.

“Oh, right. That’s what was important.”

President Stern looked at the employees he came with, and they prepared a portable beam projector and several documents.

“Listen well to what these people are explaining. It’s a headache for me, too. Because of you. Begin.”

The beam projector filled a side of the wall with complicated numbers.

“It’s nothing, just Maestro’s income for this year. This is a first for us as well, so we’re coming up with a plan with our tax lawyers.....”

The Stern Corporation staff member shook his head and smiled mysteriously. This strange expression could be understood by his following explanation.

“First is the item related to Maestro’s album and concert with Alvin Lee.”

Various records on the album appeared on the white wall.

“These are Billboard standards. The album was charted 1st place for 16 weeks. 4 songs hit No. 1 and all 12 songs took 1st place in turn in the online store.”

President Stern looked satisfied while thinking of next year’s Grammy Awards.

“Also, Alvin’s band finished their concert in 32 cities and they’re still in the middle of their tour.”

He brought up an Excel file full of numbers on the monitor.

“Just look at the last item. It’s the amount you made on the album and shows alone.”

Jun Hyuk looked at the wall and did not get a real sense of the size. The staff saw Jun Hyuk’s expression of surprise and smiled because it is not yet time for him to be surprised.

“Surprising, isn’t it? It’s the peak sales volume for single albums of the recent 10 years. You’ve brought back the wind towards buying records instead of downloading tracks. And.....”

A new number appeared and the staff continued his explanation.

“This is your income for the music you released before and album sales. It doesn’t fall behind Alvin Lee’s album.”

Jun Hyuk’s jazz album in particular is settling as a steady seller.

“Lastly... First, I ask you not to be surprised.”

There was a list of 25 songs with clear sales ranking. The top 5 songs were A, E, I, O, U. And the other 20 were the scores that Jun Hyuk revealed.

It is about the original song fees and royalties.

“First, we only revealed 20 songs as a test. We chose 20 at random. You probably noticed, but these numbers are the sales for right of use and royalties for each.”

Amelia looked at the numbers with the most surprise and almost spilled her coffee.

“It hasn’t been long since we revealed the 20 new songs. Though it was just the scores without even albums or shows, all producers and agencies that succeeded with the 5 songs before all signed on without exception.”

The previously released 5 songs had Laura’s album and a show at Carnegie Hall, and had become news. There were a lot of places that wanted to use the original songs because there is a record that they can confirm for themselves.

However, no one had expected that there would be such a reaction from just releasing scores with melody lines.

“Hang... hang on. This number isn’t wrong right now, right?”

“No. It is exact.”

The staff laughed at the surprised Amelia, and continued explaining.

“Maestro, you have surpassed Madonna and become the top earning musician. It is \$7.4 billion in total, though there is still 1 month left for the year to end.”

Madonna and Michael Jackson, who are the same age, lived entirely different lives but their final goals were the same. They are both icons of American culture. Michael Jackson became a legend and Madonna is continuing to create her legacy.

“Madonna is including her merchandise sales, perfume business, and the money she made in investments. Maestro, that’s what you made through just music. Even still, you’re 7 times Madonna in 2nd place.”

“You’re overwhelmingly ahead of all stars in film and sports, too.”

President Stern already knew the number, but he even felt fear whenever he saw it. The staff member explained where the fear stems from.

“The biggest problem is that this is just the start. The companies that pay for use haven’t been able to finish arranging or recording yet. There will be a lot of music that

uses these original songs next year.”

The staff is saying that the true revenue is starting next year. Next year when music that uses Jun Hyuk’s original song comes pouring out, a tremendous amount of royalties will come in and it is easy to predict that the income will be incomparable to what has come in now.

“So we’re going to delay on releasing the rest of the scores. Hitting jackpot has to be to a certain point to be fun, too. This is to the point where it’s scary. We might be able to do something if it were a company, but this is just personal revenue.”

This is why President Stern said that he had a headache. It is the company’s job to help its musicians reduce tax payments. Jun Hyuk barely spends his money, so there is a tax bomb that follows the revenue bomb.

“We estimate that it’ll be over \$20 billion next year. Your income can be compared to that of a record label instead of other musicians.”

“So, what are you going to do with this money?”

President Stern laughed as he asked, and Jun Hyuk was speechless, only looking at Amelia.

She blinked her big eyes and just looked at Jun Hyuk.

“There’s nothing to do really.....”

Jun Hyuk stammered and Amelia started laughing.

“Right? It’s such an unrealistic amount that you don’t get a feel for it. And you really don’t have anywhere to spend it.”

“But you have to spend some before the year ends. It’s good to buy a mansion or something. Though that won’t make a big difference or anything.”

Even if he purchases a giant mansion, it wouldn’t chisel away at his money. But Amelia’s eyes sparked at the mention of a mansion.

“There is one thing that does come to mind for me.”

“What? What comes to mind?”

Amelia bolted up and opened the door to the recording studio.

Jun Hyuk bolted up and hugged Amelia as he smiled brightly.

“Isaac. Make a studio for me. One big enough to record a choral concerto. A studio with a perfect sound system. I want a recording studio comparable to Carnegie Hall.

“What?”

“What?”

Amelia and President Stern shouted out at the same time.

“Huh? That’s not it? You weren’t talking about creating a perfect studio?”

Jun Hyuk was puzzled by Amelia’s surprise. Amelia’s action had clearly referred to the recording studio.

“I was... but not to that scale. I just meant for you to make a normal studio.”

There needs to be a recording booth that fits at least 200 people for Beethoven’s choral concerto. When thinking of the microphones necessary for this, it is basically like creating a stage performance.

“Do you really want to create a recording studio that can fit an entire orchestra?”

“Yes. That’s it.”

Jun Hyuk looked like a child with a new toy.

“A large studio... That looks like an investment and not like you’re spending money. Ha ha.”

With the kind of large studio that Jun Hyuk is asking for, there will be a fair amount of orchestras requesting to use it. Of course requests won’t be frequent enough to earn back the amount invested.

However, President Stern’s first thought was not that it is an investment simply to

make money, but that it is a cultural investment for music overall.

Of course Jun Hyuk had not said that he wanted the studio with this kind of deep thought. It is so that he can call in the New York Philharmonic if he needs to in order to create the music he wants.

Recording in studio instead of in live performances makes it possible to re-record at any time. President Stern started fleshing out Jun Hyuk's request in his head. He is thinking of something like the Performing Arts Center facilities at the Kennedy Center. As he was imagining it, he had an ominous foreboding.

"You're not thinking of living in that great studio to just spend the rest of your life creating music there, are you?"

Jun Hyuk could not answer President Stern's sudden question immediately. The jaws of Amelia and the company staff who saw this, dropped.

"Whew. I thought so."

President Stern frowned and let out a long sigh.

"I'll make that perfect studio that you want. But you can't think of it as a home."

President Stern look Jun Hyuk straight in the eyes and became resolute.

"I have no intention of watching you become like a music-producing machine, locked up in the studio, looking only at sheet music. My skin crawls just thinking about it. Live like a normal star. If it's hard to live like a star, live like a normal person."

Jun Hyuk flinched at President Stern's seriousness, and pat his shoulder as he laughed.

"Oh, okay. Well... You're so scary I can't say anything. Relax, Isaac. I'll live like every other star."

Jun Hyuk had suddenly become light.

"Alright. Then tell me. What do Americans do when they get rich?"

"What do you mean what do you they do? They use it. They build a giant mansion, get a private plane, buy dozens of super cars, buy artwork... If there's still money left, they

donate it.”

President Stern spoke heartily as he always does.

“Of course not everyone is like that. There are those who live in normal houses instead of grand mansions and drive Toyotas, living life like average people. It’s just a matter of individual philosophy.”

Chapter 255

Jun Hyuk nodded to the private plane. He is already using President Stern's plane as if it is his own. He is already used to its convenience and doesn't feel anything against purchasing one.

"Since there are several uncomfortable aspects of living in this apartment, let's look into a house first."

"What? I've never felt uncomfortable in this apartment. The location is good and something like this is like a palace to me."

President Stern shook his head.

"Alright then. Forbes reveals star incomes in June. A lot will change after that. You can't live here any longer."

"What?"

"You're just a young musician right now, but you'll become a billionaire musician after the Forbes release. There will start to be dangerous and bothersome things happening. We need to find a place for you where you can be safe."

"Hm. Then I'll have to buy a house first."

Jun Hyuk decided to throw away his preconceptions of America's rich. He has already made an enormous and unimaginable amount.

He thought that it would be better to enjoy his wealth, rather than becoming an oddball who insists on living a normal life.

"Right. A house could have no meaning to you though. You won't have a normal life of coming home every night. You won't be able to live in it half the time, but there's a feeling of security in simply knowing that you have a home."

He might live like a nomad, but it is a good thing to have a home that he maintains and embellishes. The only problem is where the house will be. Since Jun Hyuk has already

left Korea, it is okay for him to think of any place in the world that he wants to as his hometown.

“Where would you like it? America? Europe?”

“I like New York. It feels like my hometown because it’s where I’ve been living since I first arrived in America.”

“Fine. Then I’ll look into houses in New York. What kind of house do you want?”

Jun Hyuk quickly pointed to Amelia,

“We have to follow what the woman wants rather than what the man wants when choosing a house. Don’t we? Amelia?”

Amelia could not speak for a while. Jun Hyuk said it as if it were nothing, but the meaning hidden behind it is not simple.

He has never said anything about marriage. And it does not seem like he will say the word in the future either.

Amelia knows why Jun Hyuk does not talk about their future. There is a fully understandable reason for this in his past.

But asking to choose the house that they will live in together is the closest way Jun Hyuk will get to proposing. It’s okay even if they do not marry. Amelia has nothing more to ask for if they can just keep going as they are now.

Amelia wiped a tear from her eye and turned her attention to President Stern.

“We need to decide on a location first. Isaac, where would be good?”

“The East Hamptons in Long Island is the best.”

The seashore full of the villas and yachts of famous people like designer Calvin Klein, singer Billy Joel, and film director Steven Spielberg.

The best beach in America, Cooper’s Beach, is located in Long Island. As much as it is the place where New York’s rich are gathered, it is a place with safety and security.

“It’ll be adequate because it takes a little over 2 hours from Manhattan to Long Island by highway. There are a fair amount of houses on sale too.”

“2 hours? I think that’s too far.”

“What of it? You can take a helicopter when you’re busy.”

Jun Hyuk learned of another way that rich people think. Helicopters are just another form of transportation to the rich.

“Amelia. What do you think? Will Long Island be okay?”

“Of course. It’s the dream place for New Yorkers. You’ll fall in love with that sea too.”

“Then let’s do that.”

Once they made the decision to buy a house, Amelia who had been rolling around in bed became busier than she had been during her tour season.

She went around the Hamptons with a real estate agent for several days, but became exhausted when she was unable to find a house that was perfect for them. Jun Hyuk massaged her swollen calves and spoke like a billionaire.

“Amelia. What do you think about just building a house? Buy a house in a location you like first. Then we can bring the house down, design what you want, and build it new.”

Amelia flowed with energy again with Jun Hyuk’s idea.

President Stern introduced her to several of the best architects. When they found out that they were faced with building a house for a couple of rising musicians, with Jun Hyuk being one of them in particular, they created blueprints with the best conditions.

It seemed that the architects seemed to consider it a great career to have Maestro Jun’s house included in their records.

However, not even the best architects could satisfy Amelia. Jun Hyuk even started to think that at this rate, they would never be able to own a house.

“Isaac. I’m thinking of just resting with Amelia until next summer. Is that okay?”

“Next summer? Hm. I’m sure it’ll be okay. The only confirmed thing you have on your schedule is the opera recording. The opera tour will be over by around next summer too.”

“Then we’ll go to your Switzerland villa. We’ve also matched Amelia’s schedule to start after the next summer season.”

“Okay. Get a lot of rest before you come back. Oh right. How’s the house going?”

“At this rate, I don’t think we can get a design even after 10 years. I think I need to cut it off at an appropriate line.”

“Ha ha. Of course she’ll be like that. She’s still a young woman. It’s impossible to bring the house of her dreams into reality.”

“That’s why I want to go to Switzerland. I’m sure we can compromise Amelia’s dream.”

As soon as Jun Hyuk threatened to go to Switzerland alone, Amelia approved the architect’s blueprints with an attitude as if she were giving in a lot.

They went back to enjoying their peaceful and quiet life. This time, in the beautiful winter of Switzerland.

When the new year came around, they were surprised with President Stern and Tara’s surprise visit, but more so with the news that President Stern brought with them.

“Jun. You know Amsterdam’s Gebouw in the Netherlands, right?”

“Yes. The Royal Concertgebouw orchestra?”

Concertgebouw means ‘concert hall’ in Dutch.

The Concertgebouw opened in Amsterdam in April 1888, an orchestra was created, and Willem Kes was invited as standing conductor. Until it received the royal title from the queen of the Netherlands, Beatrix, it was called the Concertgebouw orchestra.

Royal Concertgebouw is one of the best venues in the world regarding its acoustics and in 2008, it beat the Berlin Philharmonic to take 1st place of 10 orchestras chosen by Gramophone.

Of course Gramophone's judgement cannot be taken as an orchestra's skill because the largest item in deciding the ranking is ticket sales.

There is an advantage to having a lot of sponsors for ticket sales. Sponsors are enterprises. Those companies purchase season tickets to give out as gifts. Because they buy the expensive seats like R and S, ticket sales are guaranteed.

Amsterdam was a trade city that took over Europe in the 16th century and can still be considered a center of finance and trade, so there are a lot of sponsors.

"A proposal came in from that Concertgebouw. They want to leave the orchestra to Dimitri starting next season. They made a proposal for standing conductor."

"What? Maestro Carras?"

"Yeah. Concertgebouw always has successful shows but the album sales aren't that good. They're just selling show albums."

Jun Hyuk was curious as to why he is being told of Dimitri Carras' circumstances. Isaac Stern would not have flown all the way to Switzerland to tell him someone else's news.

"Dimitri put your Inferno on stage. It seems they considered that bold experimental spirit highly. And they think it's great that he has a record of releasing entire albums with Tchaikovsky and Marlowe."

"Does... this call for congratulations? The New York Philharmonic and Concertgebouw are both top-notch... I'm sure he has a lot to think of."

"That's why Dimitri is asking me to find out what you think."

"What? What do you mean what I think?"

A great maestro who has gone through all of the hoops to reach the peak is asking for him opinion? When President Stern continued, Jun Hyuk was surprised.

"If you want to go to Amsterdam, he says that he'll really push for you. And if you like New York, he'll go to Amsterdam and recommend you as successor to the New York Philharmonic."

President Stern laughed in satisfaction at Jun Hyuk and Amelia's surprised and blank

faces.

There was also something that Dimitri Carras had asked him to be sure to relay to Jun Hyuk.

“There’s only half the chance that you would become the standing conductor for Concertgebouw, but he made a big fuss saying that he could put you on the podium for the New York Philharmonic.”

A young Asian in his early 20s becoming the standing conductor of a top orchestra. Even without a distinction between East and West, it is unimaginable.

Chapter 256

Amelia hugged Jun Hyuk with happiness and surprise, and President Stern was unable to hide his joy.

However, Jun Hyuk himself just seemed to be surprised. It would have been normal for him to cheer out in happiness. He quickly changed and just looked like someone who had received an offer for an ordinary job.

“Why? You don’t want to do it? Your expression doesn’t look that happy about it.”

President Stern looked over Jun Hyuk’s expression and felt something strange.

“No. I’m happy. It’s a good offer, but.....”

“I guess you don’t want to do it from the way you said ‘but.’”

“Since being a standing conductor has a big role as a player. Regular performances need to be put up each season with an orchestra as an instrument, but I think I’m more of a composer.”

No matter how much of an issue Jun Hyuk’s songs become in the world, performance repertoires need to be filled with Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Mozart, and Marlowe’s songs in the end.

Jun Hyuk cannot ignore the audience, who is the consumer, and perform the songs that he composes. No matter how great Jun Hyuk’s songs are, no symphony board will tolerate the use of a top orchestra as a tool to release new music.

“So you want to play the role of composer?”

“Yes. The New York Philharmonic can’t just play my songs if I write 20 symphonies in a year, but if orchestras around the world play one out of those 20 songs in a season, all 20 can be put on stage.”

President Stern’s jaw dropped at Jun Hyuk’s bold statement.

Jun Hyuk's intention to erase a masterpiece list that has been compiled over 300 years to fill with new songs.

He is thinking of standing shoulder to shoulder with the classical greats from Monteverdi, who made modern opera's season orfeo in 1607, to Shostakovich... He might even mean to create more masterpieces than they did.

It is impossible for a standing conductor who is in charge of one orchestra, but if various orchestras play Jun Hyuk's songs or invite him to conduct, it is entirely possible.

If Jun Hyuk says that he will perform the songs he writes at this point, most if not all orchestras will invite him. No orchestra will miss out on the chance for a premiere.

It is not a foolish dream.

But Tara cannot sit back and watch Jun Hyuk toss away the chance to conduct for the New York Philharmonic.

"Jun. It's okay to perform the songs you write yourself. But it's not bad to show your abilities as a conductor for 1 or 2 years either. Of course you can intermittently release your work in that time as well. Can't you go on with your work like that?"

When Tara rushed to say how she felt, Amelia nodded.

Becoming the standing conductor of Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw or the New York Philharmonic means standing at the vertex of the classical world.

Though the New York Philharmonic has received damage to its status in recent years, tradition and power cannot be underestimated. It can take over the top again if it meets a great conductor.

It is the best position that everyone cannot help but long for. But it did not seem like Jun Hyuk saw it as a high place.

"I already conducted Beethoven's No. 9, Choral Symphony with the New York Philharmonic. If my abilities don't show in the performance, album, and live video, then that's more of a reason not to go. No?"

Jun Hyuk is laughing as he speaks, but he has already made up his mind.

“But Jun...”

“Tara, let’s stop.”

President Stern had been listening to Jun Hyuk, and gave Tara a signal.

“Don’t forget our jobs. Tara, it’s priority for us to achieve whatever Jun wants. Jun conducting for the New York Philharmonic is what we want to see. The order is wrong.”

President Stern looked back at Jun Hyuk.

“Jun. It’s a really interesting thought. But there needs to be one premise to do what you’re talking about.”

“Of course. It’s that conductors all around the world need to want to play the songs I write.”

President Stern snapped his fingers.

“That’s it! You can do it, right?”

“Should we try testing it?”

Everyone looked at Jun Hyuk as he laughed jokingly. They start to have joyful imaginations whenever he laughs like that.

“Test?”

“Yes. I’ll give you 5 of the songs I think are okay of the ones that I’ve made until now. Show those.”

“Show them? To who?”

“The conductors most suitable to play the 5 songs.”

“What? Did you think of the conductors while writing the songs?”

“No. I’m not that considerate of a person. I just thought about who would be best at expressing them after writing them.”

Jun Hyuk said that composer is his job, but it is not the right expression. He is trying to supply orchestras all over the world with music. Just as he created a fuss in the music market by revealing scores with melodies, he intends to bring the same shock to the world of classical music.

It seems that the offer of becoming a standing conductor had become an opportunity for him to think about what he is better at.

“This sounds like it’ll be fun. I’m already curious to see what expressions maestros will make when they receive your scores.”

Unlike President Stern, Amelia was unable to hide her disappointment. Being a standing conductor is the most grand and varying position, and it would mean that he has in his hand an orchestra, the hardest instrument to handle.

There is a happiness and bliss that a conductor feels after trimming that instrument and it becomes all his own. It is a bliss that not even visiting conductors can experience.

Amelia witnessed that moment of bliss while performing with an orchestra. Jun Hyuk is giving up that happiness.

However, she did not voice her thoughts. Her boyfriend is someone who lives in another world. She already knows from plenty of experience that it is impossible to completely understand him or persuade him.

Amelia was lost in her own thoughts, but came back to her senses when President Stern spoke.

“Oh right. Can you come back in February for a bit?”

“February? Why? Is something happening?”

“The Academy Awards. We received an official notification that the film music you made has been nominated for an Oscar.”

Jun Hyuk thought for a moment.

“Aha. I forgot about that. You’re talking about that thriller, right?”

“Yeah. You were nominated for 2 categories: Best Original Score and Best Original Song. Isn’t it a definite that you’ll win? Ha ha.”

President Stern’s boasting could really be a given. The OST strangely rose in the top 10 in album charts, and it rose in ranks for New Age and Pop music ranks.

Jun Hyuk’s music was called the best film music since Eminem’s ‘Lose Yourself’ in ‘8 Mile’ in 2003, so there is no doubt that he will win.

The Best Original Song award is not selecting the film’s main theme song. It is selecting the best single song out of all film music. That single song could be an instrumental without a singer. The person who sings the theme is not the award receiver.

It is evaluating the entire music used in the movie. The award is not given if each song is outstanding. It evaluates how harmonious it makes the movie and whether it complements the movie.

That is why the composer and lyricist are in 2 categories.

“It’s a bit much to go all the way to LA to get that trophy. We don’t even know if I’ll win. If I do win, can you just go and speak on my behalf?”

“Me? The film’s director can speak instead.”

President Stern waved his hand. The Oscars is a festival for people related to the film industry. The Grammy Awards following soon after is the stage that President Stern wants.

“We need to go to LA anyway. Don’t even dream of having someone accept the award on your behalf at the Grammys. Alvin and your friends will be flying over from Europe as well. You need to attend. Didn’t you promise me?”

Jun Hyuk’s music is nominated for various categories and there is a high chance that he will win, so President Stern is dreaming of Jun Hyuk with his arms full of trophies.



The Oscars began in 1929 and members of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences voted and chose among the movies of that year.

It is the award show that represents the world of film and show business and is broadcast live regardless of time zones like the Super Bowl, Grammys, and Golden Globes.

The awards ceremony is held in Dolby Theater, which used to be called the Kodak Theater, with musical actor Neil Patrick Harris as host. It is a grand show where Hollywood stars can be seen in one place.

Comedians introduce the nominated movies and reveal the winners with “And the Oscar goes to...”

Chapter 257

As President Stern assured, Director Louis O'Connell received the awards for Best Original Score and Best Original Song on behalf of Jun Hyuk.

"Two. This number has special meaning to me. The two movies I made. Two Oscars."

Louis O'Connell's debut indie film won the 'Short Film Award' and the thriller he made this time won the Screenplay award.

"And it's the number of times I saw Jun who wrote the music for this movie – just two times. The time it took for him to complete the entire OST after watching the movie – just two seconds. And the two trophies we received today. Oh right. The number also includes the times I've been married."

Light laughter came out inside the theater with Louis O'Connell's joke.

"Jun. He is this age's maestro, who does not need words to describe him. It is an honor that the first movie he made music for is mine. Of course the way he rejected my earnest wishes for him to take on the music for my next movie is embedded in my heart, I have not yet given up."

The host joked that someone appearing on behalf of the winner should not have such long remarks, so Louis O'Connell said his last words and left the stage.

"His music is a gift from God. I am one of the countless people who wait happily and anxiously for his gift. Just like you do."

Louis O'Connell was not the only person who had been rejected in commissioning film music. As soon as the rumor spread that he could complete the music in just a day, film producers chased by production periods knocked on Stern Corporation's door with a large bundle of money, but they just received cold refusals.

They were given the absurd response that it is boring work because the creative process was too easy and all he had to do was move the music onto scores.

The 2 Oscars Jun Hyuk received through Louis O'Connell's movie would become the

only Academy Award trophies that would decorate his house.



When Jun Hyuk came back to LA for the Grammy Awards, the first people he met with were Alvin and the members.

Kyung Min Ho in particular had changed so much he was unrecognizable. His unsure and anxious look was completely gone, and he looked like a relaxed star musician.

“Jun. What do we do if our album sweeps up all the Grammys? I feel like I’m going to go crazy just thinking about it.”

“Huh? Min Ho, why are you speaking in English? And your English has gotten a lot better.”

“Oh right. It’s become a habit. Alvin hit me if I didn’t use English.”

Kyung Min Ho scratched his head and behind him, there was someone in a cold sweat who Jun Hyuk was seeing for the first time.

“Jun, say hi. This is our guitarist.

As soon as Alvin spoke, the guitarist held his hand out and waited for Jun Hyuk to take it.

“It’s an honor, Maestro. It feels like a dream that I’m in the same hotel as you. I’m Todd Hill.”

“He’s an admirer of yours. He owns all of your albums. Even your Korean debut album, which I heard is really hard to get your hands on.”

Colin laughed as he pointed to Todd, and Todd’s face flushed even more.

“It’s a pleasure. I’m sure you have tremendous ability if you’re able to satisfy picky Colin and Alvin.”

Jun Hyuk shook Todd’s hand and stared at him.

“I feel like I’ve seen you before... Have we met before?”

“Oh, of course not. I wouldn’t have forgotten if I met you before. I just have a common face.”

Alvin had not been able to find a guest guitarist with the Germany tour ahead of them. The German office held auditions to find a guitarist, and the audition acted as incredible promotion for the show.

Alvin, Colin, and Kyung Min Ho held final auditions again for the 3 candidates that the promotion agency chose, and Todd was the guitarist who came out in the end.

The guitar melody he let out can transform to various genres, starting with the blues. He is a guitarist who is faithful to the basic idea that “guitar is played by feeling”.

He was only supposed to play with them through the Germany shows, but the potential he showed as a guitarist captured Colin and Alvin saw it as the birth of an outstanding guitarist, so they decided to go through the rest of the tour together. It was a Cinderella story.

“He does look very average. Alright, let’s go. You’ll be surprised too when you hear him play the guitar in rehearsals.”

Alvin stood up from the sofa and put his hand on Jun Hyuk’s shoulder.

There will be a special star performance at the Grammys. They are all nominees, and the main hero cannot be missing.



Staples Center is home to the LA Lakers, and where this year’s Grammys is being held.

Stage and seating for the Grammys had already been set up, and musicians were bustling around.

Introductions went smoothly because Alvin is familiar with them, and they did not let go of Jun Hyuk’s hand as Todd had done. No one forgot to say that they would like to work on music with him.

The song that they will be playing in the special performance is the biggest hit in “The Life of Alvin” album, ‘Wife’.

It became a twin guitar with Jun Hyuk participating, and the song arranged to fit 2 guitars together would be a new side for this special stage.

“Ha ha. Wait... wait. Ha ha.”

They stopped mid-performance because of Jun Hyuk’s laughter and everyone was confused, but Jun Hyuk could not stop laughing for a while.

He looked at Todd once he finally stopped laughing, and Todd shouted in surprise.

“Did I do something wrong?”

“Oh, no. I just remembered something from a long time ago. Sorry. That was my mistake. Alright. Let’s start again.”

He cannot remember exactly where it was, but he thought of the guitarist of an unknown band who playing Randy Rose’s ‘Dee’ on a dark road. The sense to go into the flow of the song he made and find the guitar’s variation. The musicality to find the composer’s intention and play the music in 2 versions within moments.

Jun Hyuk had been right when he said that he would one day break away from his namelessness. That nameless guitarist, Todd, is standing on a special stage for the Grammys.

Jun Hyuk could not stop smiling through the entire rehearsal.



Stars arrived at Staples Center at 5 in the afternoon. They walked the red carpet, waved to cheering fans, and posed in the photozone for reporters.

CBS is live broadcasting the ceremony, and its reporter was holding short interviews with the entering stars.

Today’s Grammys is strangely excited. This atmosphere was created because it is normal for several albums to share the awards but this year, one album is going to sweep up all of them.

It even felt like the watching fans and musicians themselves were betting on how

many trophies this masterpiece album would take home.

When Amelia got out of the limousine, wearing a red dress that shows all of the curves of her body, cameras started flashing like fireworks.

Behind her, Jun Hyuk came out in black and all of the cameras near the red carpet gathered in. They greeted the cheers while affectionately holding hands, and slowly walked the red carpet.

“Maestro. Will you tell us how many trophies you will be taking home today?”

The station reporter held a microphone out to him and asked what everyone is wondering.

“I don’t know. That’s not a question that I can answer. And I’m not the main person for the album, but Alvin. The album is Alvin’s.”

When Jun Hyuk gave a boring answer, the reporter moved the microphone to Amelia.

“What does it feel like to be dating the 21st century Beethoven?”

“You left out the part that he’s a handsome Beethoven. How does it feel? Like I experience a miracle everyday?”

The reporter had nothing to say in response, so the couple went into the center.

The Grammys curtains went up with hip hop legend artist LL Cool J as MC.

There are 4 parts to the Grammy Awards’ core. Song of the Year, Record of the Year, Album of the Year, and Best New Artist.

Song of the Year is awarded to the composer and lyricist. Record of the Year is awarded to everyone related, like the singer, composer, lyricist, player, and engineer.

With each nomination announcement and award, and special performance, the passion in Staples Center grew hotter.

Jun Hyuk’s name was first called for Best Instrumental Composition and Best Instrumental Arrangement.

There are composition and arrangement awards for performance.

4 nominees were announced and the name called after “The winner is...” was Jun.

One of the 3 songs in ‘The Life of Alvin’ had won for composition and arrangement.

“I am just thankful to Alvin, who gave me this lightning-like inspiration. His voice, his story, are the origins of this music.”

Jun Hyuk finished his short acceptance speech and left the stage, but there was no time for him to sit for even a moment.

He was up for Best Rock Performance, Best Metal Performance, and Best Rock Song, and took all 3 trophies. Fortunately, he was able to pass the acceptance speeches on to Alvin Lee, who had gone on stage with him.

Jun Hyuk gave the trophy for Best Engineered Album to the engineers who worked with him on the album. They gave a modest speech in his stead to say that Jun Hyuk is the one who should be receiving the trophy.

Director Louis O’Connell needed to receive Best Music Video, but he had not attended, saying that he needs to pay Jun Hyuk back for not attending the Academy Awards. He also said that a festival for musicians should be full of only musicians. Alvin Lee had to run on stage again.

Awards for film soundtracks are in sections like Best Music Film. The host quickly announced winners without nomination announcements. They have to go through over 80 awards. The winner is the album that gave Jun Hyuk Oscar trophies.

When even the trophy for Producer of the Year went to Jun Hyuk, all attendees stood up and clapped.

Chapter 258

They are cheering for Jun Hyuk who was able to achieve all of these amazing feats, and not the number of trophies he took. For singers in particular, it is a blessing to meet this kind of producer.

Their cheering also includes their envy over Alvin Lee.

The female singer who won Best Pop Solo Performance raised her hand and gestured to Jun Hyuk.

“This trophy is thanks to Maestro Jun. My album is an arrangement of his ‘A, I, U, E, O’. I give the honor to him.”

There was clapping again for Jun Hyuk, and CBS cameras shot a close up of Jun Hyuk’s embarrassed face. Jun Hyuk has not yet listened to this album, which is an arrangement of his songs.

The ceremony kept heading toward the end. Once Best New Artist was given out, Alvin Lee’s special performance began.

This performance felt like it was telling everyone who the winner of the remaining 3 awards would be. The musicians attending the show seemed to have given up on trying to win the awards, and were enjoying the show.

It is evident from album sales even without the critical acclaim. Musicians up for the 3 major awards also know that their albums cannot be compared to ‘The Life of Alvin’.

Song of the Year went to ‘Wife’ and Record of the Year and Album of the Year went to ‘The Life of Alvin’.

As what President Stern had said it in jest was unfolding, his eyes started turning red as he sat behind the audience.

Alvin Lee and the members gave their acceptance speeches for Album of the Year with both hands full of trophies as they enjoyed the flashing cameras.

Jun Hyuk dominated today's Grammys as he took a total of 10 awards. Michael Jackson with 'Thriller' and Santana with 'Supernatural' had the most awards in history with 8 each, but Jun Hyuk had broken that record today.

The ending performance for the Grammys was up to Metallica, the 'God of Metal'. They are distant from a Grammy award because they did not release an album this year, but they showed the stance of a great by embellishing the last stage with an incredible performance.

Everyone stood up and cheered when they entered. When they discovered another great entering, their cheering near that of astonishment.

It was Jun Hyuk.

This surprise show that started with a word from Metallica's guitarist, Kirk Hammett. When they had met in rehearsals, Kirk Hammett jokingly asked Jun Hyuk when he would be repaying him for using his mansion in Hawaii. The program producer had seen this and proposed a joint performance. And that joint performance had come to be the ending show of the Grammys.

The special performance was created in 2 floors, and there was a grand piano on the top floor. Jun Hyuk sat in front of the piano and played the keys.

The song that flowed from his fingertips was Metallica's 'One'.



Kyung Min Ho was not the only person who was stroking the 10 trophies in disbelief. This was the same for Tara and President Stern as well.

"Jun, take all of these trophies. That's only right."

"Don't talk nonsense. It's your album, Alvin."

Though the album has his own name on it, Alvin spoke of it as Jun Hyuk's work and showed that he has no thoughts of taking the trophies.

Neither gave in and kept talking noisily when President Stern interjected.

“Leave it to me. I know where these trophies will look best.”

With a look from President Stern, the staff started to carefully pack up the trophies.

“Isaac. Where is the place that you’re so confident?”

Alvin looked at President Stern in suspicion, wondering what the old man had up his sleeve this time.

“We’re actually in the middle of creating a music hall right now. It’s something Jun wants.”

“What? A music hall?”

“Yeah. Jun said he wants a complete studio, so I’m working on it.”

“Isaac, I just talked about a studio. I wasn’t thinking about a music hall.”

Jun Hyuk was confused by something he was hearing about for the first time as well. A music hall? In his mind, he thought of Avery Hall, the home of the New York Philharmonic. On the one hand, he even started to feel excited when he imagined a theater.

A studio and theater of his own. It is perfect with just one more thing.

“The basement will have the perfect studio Jun spoke of, and the ground will have a large concert hall that can seat at least 6,000 people and theaters of various sizes. There needs to be an outdoor music hall too... It’ll have all facilities.”

A passionate heat came out of his eyes as he explained it.

“Anyway, It’s a huge project that we’re putting \$5 billion into. \$3 billion from Jun, and I’m investing \$2 billion. There are a lot of outside people who want to invest too, but I turned all of them down. They might start bothering us with something like a Board of Directors.”

Alvin’s jaw dropped at the mention of \$5 billion, and Kyung Min Ho was converting it to the Korean won on his fingers.

“What... 5 trillion won?”

Kyung Min Ho always tried to speak in English, but he could not help but burst out in Korean right now.

“I already talked to New York’s mayor, too. New York City is going to take care of the infrastructure construction. We’re working on purchasing the site and designing right now.”

“Isaac. I feel like this is the first time Jun is hearing about this too from his expression... Are you doing all of this without discussing it with him?”

Alvin barely came back to his senses and spoke as he looked at Jun Hyuk.

“Arbitrarily taking care of it when \$3 billion of Jun’s money is going into it... You really are a wicked manager. He he.”

President Stern waved his hand at Alvin’s joke.

“You say that because you don’t know. \$3 billion? That’s nothing to Jun. He must have made over \$20 billion this year. It’s actually a bigger deal that I invested \$2 billion. My band account is completely empty.”

Jun Hyuk did not show any reaction to the number, as though proving what President Stern was saying.

Before President Stern could even finish, Kyung in Ho was counting on his fingers again. When he was done converting from dollars to won, his mouth would not close.

Money in the trillions! Isn’t that the kind of number in government budgets or conglomerate families like Samsung? An individual making trillions of won?

‘He’s on a different scale.’

Kyung Min Ho’s earnings increased dramatically while participating in Alvin’s album and the concert tour. He had been making in the thousands or ten thousands range in Korea, but the money he now had in the bank was in the hundred thousands. But a number in the billions is not something that he can wrap his head around.

President Stern did not mind the other people being surprised, and kept talking about his plan with a heated expression.

“The music hall’s name is Jun Center. It’ll become a landmark comparative to Lincoln Center. We’re also working on a program that’ll allow young and promising artists with nowhere to perform except on the streets, to perform at the center for free. We’re going to find the hidden gems.”

Jun Hyuk had only been listening until now, when he finally spoke up.

“Then when will that project be done? I want that studio quickly... Will this take years?”

“Don’t worry. We’re going to finish building the studio first. You’ll be able to use it by the summer latest.”

He still looked full of concern.

“And change the name.”

“The name? Why? Do you want to write it in Korean?”

“No. You invested in it too, so it needs to be Jun & Stern. Why is my name the only one on it. JS Center. That sounds good.”

President Stern burst out in laughter.

“You really always exceed my expectations. I would have cried out of sadness if you hadn’t said that first. I get upset with the smallest things as I get older.”

President Stern took the trophies that the employees had packed up, and left for the hotel laughing.

Alvin’s group went to Detroit to continue with their tour, and Jun Hyuk went back to Switzerland with Amelia. He did not forget to ask for a favor before leaving.

“Tara. Get all of the albums that were released by arranging my music. I want to listen to them.”

“What? All of them? That’ll be easily over several hundreds.”

“It’s okay. I can tell what they’ll be like just by listening to the first part anyway. If I listen to the entirety of an album, wouldn’t that be an incredible album?”

It is something he thought of as he saw the pop singer who won a Grammy with an album arranged with his music. He provided original melodies, but never thought about the results.

He wants to see the diversity. It is fun to see how his music changed while passing through various people's hands.

Chapter 259

Jun Hyuk and Amelia stayed in Switzerland until the end of summer. They started each day while listening to the CDs Tara sent over as they ate breakfast and talked about the music.

There were terrible songs and great songs. There were even songs that were so surprising they forgot that they were eating.

They enjoyed the Switzerland spring and summer at noon and when it got dark, Jun Hyuk drew notes on scores and Amelia played the piano accordingly.

When they arrived at the airport in New York, the first place they went was the studio.

The only moving elevator in a music hall under construction. That elevator only went to the basement.

Jun Hyuk entered the studio on the 3rd floor basement and burst out in admiration. The studio of his dreams was before his eyes.

The regular recording booth was good too, but the booth that could fit more than 200 performers was made as if a theater stage had been moved into a booth with a high ceiling and sturdy walls and floor so that not a single sound could escape.

There were 2 people waiting next to President Stern, who was making sure that Jun Hyuk was satisfied.

“Jun, say hi. This is the manager who will take over operations for the studio and the senior engineer. They’re the best in New York – no – America.”

The first thing that Jun Hyuk said after exchanging brief greetings showed the 2 people their rough future.

“Then shall we start this studio’s historical first recording?”

“Excuse me? Now?”

“Yes. I’m sure you’re keeping it in a state where we can record at any time?”

“Of course. It’s just that this is so sudden.....”

“You’ll have to become used to this kind of abruptness if you’re to work with me.”

The 2 men were flustered as they began to prepare for recording.

“But what will you be recording?”

“Amelia, are you tired?”

“Not at all. I’m always ready.”

Amelia shook her fingers and went into the recording booth.

“Okay. Then how about Piano Sonata D Minor?”

President Stern was also flustered.

“Jun, what piano sonata? What song is that?”

“Oh. It’s a series I made while in Switzerland with Amelia. 8 piano sonatas. They express Switzerland from January to August.”

“Didn’t you promise you would forget music and rest?”

He frowned because it is not even 1 song, but 8.

“Isaac. This is a gift I made for my girlfriend. I don’t think of such things as work.”

Jun Hyuk laughed and was looking delicately at Amelia in the recording booth.

“These 8 songs are subtitled Amelia in Switzerland. We’ll record first, so discuss matters over albums or shows with Amelia and her manager.”

When the engineer signalled okay, Amelia started playing the piano.

An expanded chord appearing at the start, arpeggio. The first theme showed a scattered chord, and flowed into a second theme that was more melodious.

It started with a slow and lyrical 1st act, with a continuing breath of pianissimo of cold Switzerland covered in snow. The frozen Alps spread out before them and the jazzy 3rd act ended the song.

When Jun Hyuk checked the recording with a satisfied expression, the engineers let out a sigh of relief.

“Amelia. The 2nd act was a little strong, right? Let’s try it again a bit more softly.”

He repeated doing it again five times before they finished recording.

“Let’s go with the 4th take of the Act 2.”

When a piano sonata was completed all of a sudden, the studio staff were able to witness Jun Hyuk’s abilities, which they had only heard rumors about. It is hard to believe that a new record might come out everyday, but it is something that they have to accept.

“It’ll get noisy if this comes out as a record. I think this will become part of the fixed repertoires of all pianists all over the world.”

President Stern showed no traces of getting mad that Jun Hyuk had worked instead of resting, and clapped for Amelia as she came out of the recording booth.

“No pianist is going to just listen to this kind of music. Their fingers will be tingling because they’ll want to play it too.”

“Isaac. I told you these songs are a gift I’m giving Amelia. Does it make sense to share a gift with the world?”

“What?”

“No one other than Amelia can perform these. Same for albums and shows.”

President Stern burst out in laughter.

“Damn. It would have been nice if I had a boyfriend like you too. I wonder what it feels like to receive a piano song that only I can play. I can’t imagine it.”

“Do you want to start learning the piano now? I’ll take care of lessons.”

Amelia smiled heartily and pat President Stern's shoulder.

"Oh right! And I want to meet these people."

He took 3 CDs out of his backpack.

"This is... The albums I sent you?"

When Tara saw the CDs, her eyes grew wide. They are singers who released albums with Jun Hyuk's music. Looking at the CD labels, two are women and one is a band.

"They were great. I listened to them with Amelia over breakfast, and we focused until the end of the CD tracks. We even forgot we were eating breakfast."

President Stern took the CDs and looked all over them.

"Honestly if they had met proper producers and a good session, they could have won the Grammy award for Best New Artist this year. They're much better musicians than the winner in the pop section."

"Are... Are you thinking of recording again?"

"No. How can we do it again when the albums are already out? I prepared some songs that are perfect for these people."

President Stern frowned again. How many songs did he write while in Switzerland?

"Oh, relax. It wasn't a big deal. I only worked on it for about 2 days. We really did get rest in Switzerland."

"We need to delay working with these people we don't even know. We need to go to Berlin."

"Berlin?"

"You don't remember your symphonies? The 5 pieces."

"Aha. They got back about that?"

"Of course. Everyone was over the moon about them. I lied a little. That Jun created

these symphonies especially for them. The 5 maestros were happy like children. He he.”

Jun Hyuk shook his head. How old will he get before he stops joking like that?

“But Berlin’s Serill Petrenko said that he would rather see you conducting. What do you think?”

“No. I want to work on these albums first. And I won’t be conducting orchestras for the time being.”

Jun Hyuk cautiously announced what he had decided while staying in Switzerland.

“Isaac. Once this music hall is complete, what do you think about making an orchestra that will represent it?”

Everyone in the studio, including President Stern, were shocked. They are smart enough to understand this as his saying that he wants to create an orchestra that he can call an instrument of his own.

“Orchestra? Are you serious?”

“Yes. We can’t let JS Center stay idle.”

Jun Hyuk was saying it in a roundabout way, but President Stern knows what he truly means.

“Then we’ll have to get a recruiting advertisement out first. We need to hurry up and hold auditions.”

“Oh, no. Didn’t you say that it would easily take 3 years for JS Center to be completed? I don’t think we need to recruit members yet.”

“There are 2 and a half years left now. And we need to hurry up and gather them. They’re people who will have to learn songs that they’ve never heard before, no?”

Jun Hyuk was unable to respond and his face flushed. He looked like his true thoughts had been completely found out.

“Why? Isn’t that the purpose? That you want to play your songs as much as you want?

The desire to hear the melodies that are only in your mind?”

Jun Hyuk scratched his head in embarrassment.

“Is it that obvious?”

“Yeah. Anyone here could tell that much. Ha ha.”

President Stern laughed refreshingly and pat Jun Hyuk on the back.

“Fine. I’ll get started on it as soon as possible. But you need to know one thing. You’ll need to promise incredible conditions because they’ll need to be prepared to perform in front of empty seats.”

This time, everyone except Jun Hyuk blinked at President Stern, not understanding what he said. No audience at Maestro Jun’s show? Isn’t he the person who made top news every time he performed?

“Aren’t you thinking of giving the soft songs people tend to like, whether they’re songs you already made or ones that you will make in the future, to other philharmonics and putting out only the works that you want to perform? The complex, sophisticated, even violent ones?”

Jun Hyuk did not deny it when he had already been found out.

“We’ll need a lot of money.”

“Of course. If you can’t take care of bonuses for album sales and shows abroad, you need to offer that additional payment. On top of that, you’ll act like a dictator with your high standards until you get the results you want... Thinking of the complaints including all of that, don’t you think you’ll need to give twice as much?”

“Twice.....”

“Is there a need to worry? There are still 80 songs that you haven’t even released yet. If you release all of those, there will be enough money to pay all of the orchestras in the world.”

President Stern did not worry about money from the beginning. He just feels burden that it will be an orchestra of different character than the others existing all around

the world. Will fitting people try out for it? Will people gather in out of curiosity and quit because it is too difficult?

President Stern tried to get rid of his complicated thoughts, and smiled

“Money won’t be a problem even if you say that you want to go out into space and perform on the moon. The only problem is that the science can’t keep up.”

Jun Hyuk’s face changed for a moment. He blinked with a new thought, and President Stern quickly yelled.

“Look here! Don’t look so serious. It’s a joke!”

“Oh, I know. What performance in space where there’s no oxygen... I know that much about the transmission of sound.”

President Stern pushed Jun Hyuk and Amelia.

“There there. That’s enough for today. Isn’t it too much to get to work as soon as you get back from Switzerland? Go home and relax. Amelia, you worked hard too.”

When they left the basement studio and came to the ground floor, a helicopter was waiting for them.

“Is there a helicopter landing pad on the apartment building’s roof?”

“No. Not the apartment, but our new house. There’s still some small construction to finish up, but it’s enough to live in.”

She must have had the construction of the new house in mind the entire time that they were in Switzerland from the way she appears to know everything going on. Jun Hyuk wrapped his arm around Amelia’s waist and they boarded the helicopter.

Chapter 260

The house was much simpler than expected. He thought that it might be a tremendous mansion because it is in an area where only the super rich live, but there wasn't even a swimming pool. Instead, there was a large forest reminiscent of a park.

"But Amelia, what's that other building on the side?"

Jun Hyuk was pointing at a building far from the main house.

"Oh, your studio. I put all of the audio, recording, and instruments in there. Oh right. The audio system is a gift from me to you. I spent all the money I made playing piano all year until my fingernails fell out, so treat it how you treat me. And I made the basement into a recording studio. I won't even go near it, so it's completely a place of your own."

Jun Hyuk smiled from ear to ear and walked toward the annex building when Amelia yelled.

"You want to die? You're going to go to your studio without seeing our bedroom first? I'm going to bulldoze it."

Amelia was not able to spend even 10 days in the bedroom she loved so much. She went back to her routine and had to start living like a nomad with her manager again. What had changed was that she was getting around more comfortably without having to take longer routes with Jun Hyuk's private plane.

After Amelia left, Jun Hyuk's life was just him going back and forth between his studio at home and the studio at the JS Center.

Unlike Jun Hyuk's simple life, the outside was noisy with his news everyday.

When it was revealed that they would be establishing an orchestra for JS Center and the details came out, professional musicians and conservatory students in classical music were stirred up.

Everyone's jaws dropped at the salary that was three times the amount of other

orchestra and Jun Hyuk was said to be the conductor for life, but it was also because of the recruitment ad that obviously showed who the owner of the orchestra is.

It hinted that the main repertoire would be Jun Hyuk's works and the best treatment and working environment would be provided, but they need to agree to the condition that they can be fired at any time if they do not show improvement and development if they want to apply.

It was unconventional that there will not be any separation in aspects like 1st or 2nd performer, and positions will change frequently with the pieces they perform.

It was also unusual that the audition will not look at names or experience, and progress with registration numbers. The intent to look only at current ability showed clearly.

Applying was just leaving an e-mail and instrument part on JS Center's temporary homepage. The purpose of the e-mails was only to notify applicants of the audition date and time.

Tens of thousands of people applied, including the truly strong musicians, those who call themselves exceptional, performers who are not that great, and those who applied because of the money.

"This is troublesome. It'll take 1 year to audition all of these people."

"Isaac. We would need to see 100 people every single day to make it in a year. It was reckless not to look at experience."

"100 people in a day? That's not realistic either. We'll need to hold auditions for at least 2 years."

"Exactly. Even though it's Maestro Jun's orchestra, we should have persuaded him."

President Stern and the staff racked their brains for a method, but nothing clear came out. There was something that they were forgetting however. That is Jun Hyuk himself.

"What are you thinking about so hard? We should be done in a week at most."

"What? One week? How?"

“200 people can fit in the basement studio. We can have rounds of 200 people perform for 10 minutes by instrument parts, and pick from there. I’m just worried there won’t be able performers in the entire number of applicants.”

At first, no one knew what Jun Hyuk was talking about. However, they all hit their knees and started laughing.

“I see. We were forgetting the maestro’s incredible listening skills.”

The first day of auditions was the violin. The thousands of people who gathered at JS Center with their violin cases were surprised by the number of people auditioning. There was even bustling when they discovered a known violinist among them.

The first 200 people were called in numerical order and took the elevator down to the basement studio. Their jaws dropped at the tremendous scale of the huge studio.

Staff members escorted 200 violinists into the recording booth, and they looked at each other bustling. At first, they thought that they were going to be told how the auditions would proceed. However, the way they were evenly spaced out in the room felt like they were in position as an orchestra, so they felt even more nervous.

Shortly after, the recording booth door opened and the famous young maestro came in. Jun Hyuk stood on the podium and spoke in a businesslike manner.

“A score will come up on the screen momentarily. When I send the signal, play according to that score. If you miss my signal and start late or early, you will be eliminated automatically. Missing the conductor’s signal is a mistake that not even amateurs make.”

When Jun Hyuk raised both of his arms, the applicants put their violins to their chins and prepared to move their bows at any time.

As Jun Hyuk said, a score came up on the screen. But it is music that they are seeing for the first time. While they tried to read over the score quickly, Jun Hyuk’s baton moved.

The applicants did their very best not to lose the score and Jun Hyuk’s baton. However, they quickly realized that the baton would simply help them keep the beat.

When the 10 minute performance ended, Jun Hyuk used his baton to sort out the

applicants.

“Number 4, 36, 168..... These people stay behind and the rest can go back. Thank you.”

The 200 people were in a state of confusion after Jun Hyuk’s dry announcement of the results because they could not figure out what was going on. The 3 people whose numbers were called were also bewildered.

“Um Maestro. I’m sorry, but is this the audition?”

“Yes.”

While the eliminated violinists were packing their violins and leaving the recording booth, someone burst out in discontent.

“Of course it is right that the decision is made based according to the maestro’s standards... but isn’t this too much?”

“What’s too much?”

Jun Hyuk frowned and looked at the applicant who was objecting to his method.

“200 people played a song that they saw for the first time and you choose from among them? Honestly, this is the first time I’ve seen an audition like this. It’s hard to accept its fairness.”

“Fairness... What’s your number?”

“Excuse me?”

“Your number.”

“143.”

“Then you performed from that spot, right?”

“Yes.”

“You missed 2 notes, 3 fingering mistakes, you lost the tempo once. Even if it’s the first time you’re seeing this score, you made all of these mistakes in a short 10 minutes... If

I were you, I'd disappear quietly out of embarrassment. Don't you think you're being shameless?"

Number 143 gulped under Jun Hyuk's sharp reproach. While he could not say anything, the other applicants had looks of disbelief.

It may be difficult if all of the instruments are different, there are conductors who are able to pick out where mistakes were made. But they are all violins with the same timbre. He not only pointed out that something was strange, but how many mistakes were made and how many times. The impossible was happening in front of them.

"And Number 143, you're left handed?"

"Excuse me? Yes. That's... that's right."

"Left handed people need to hold the elbow of the hand with the bow 3 to 5 centimeters higher than right handed people do. That's how a clear sound comes out. Unless you fix that, you won't pass any auditions."

The candidates froze as they were leaving the recording booth. He picked up on not only mistakes, but that the performer is left-handed?

"The audition is fair. And I hope the people who passed understand that this is just the 1st round. Not even I know how many rounds there will be. If there is anyone else who has a problem with the way our auditions are being held, speak up. Just keep in mind that you might hear something more harsh."

Everyone except the 3 people whose numbers were called, left the studio as though running away. The 3 who passed were so tense that they wanted to follow after them as well. Performing under a conductor like that?

Their burden reached its peak.

When the 2nd group of candidates came down, there were far less people.

"Huh? Why are there so few people?"

Less than 100 people were holding their violins and waiting for him.

"They all left. The people who were just eliminated told them how the auditions are

held... and one candidate revealed that he used to be with the Munich Philharmonic. It seems they made a fuss and ran away.”

“Then these are all of the violin candidates left over?”

“Yes, Maestro.”

This was not just the case with violinists. When talk of the 1st day of auditions spread on the internet and social media, only a little over 100 people out of tens of thousands of applicants showed up for each instrument.

Due to this, they were able to hold higher quality auditions with great performers. 82 people passed the auditions until the 3rd round, and they became the founding members of Jun Hyuk’s orchestra.

They moved to New York a month later and stepped back into the large studio in JS Center again.

Chapter 261

When Jun Hyuk came through the recording booth door, the waiting orchestra members bolted up from their seats. Jun Hyuk laughed and waved his hand so they could sit back down. When the person closest to the door got up to close the door to the booth, Jun Hyuk waved at him to leave it alone.

“First off, congratulations on becoming official members.”

Jun Hyuk clapped lightly and everyone finally realized that they had become members of this incredible orchestra, and their faces brightened.

More than half were veterans of other famous orchestras, and there were complete rookies. However, they had something in common as well. Not a single person had gray hair.

The members were feeling it dimly as well. Older people had not even bothered to audition because it is difficult for them to follow this scary maestro’s rigorous directing.

“The first thing I can tell you is about money. If you become an orchestra to the standard that I want and those who are able to withstand it until that happens, you will be sitting on money.”

The members had been expecting more agreeable and warm words, so their faces hardened. This young maestro is too straightforward and coarse.

“I’ll give incentives for each show’s ticket sales and each album’s sales performance.”

The members already know that Jun Hyuk’s choral concerto album is a million seller. It is not an exaggeration that they will be sitting on money if they release dozens of albums like that.

“First, I’ll give you a taste of the money. After one month, you all will be recording my opera. We’re working on the first album with the premiere’s original cast.”

The members’ jaws dropped. A world tour that went over a year. It is a work that sold

out each time and rewrote the history of opera.

If it comes out as a record, it will sell at least as much as the audience was mobilized. It is normal for the audience who witnessed the show in person to purchase the album in order to experience that emotion again. And how many people are manic about the movie 'Godfather'? They are positive that this album is going to become a collector's item for the millions of people around the world who love the movie.

Record companies are saying that the opera album is going to sell at least 10 million.

Karajan sold 200 million albums while serving as life conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic. That was called the Berlin Philharmonic's Golden Age. The orchestra members all earned a ton of money from album sales and performances abroad through incentives. However, Karajan released over 1000 albums with the Berlin Philharmonic.

Jun Hyuk's orchestra will sell 10 million with just one album. Compared to Jun Hyuk's orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic's Golden Age is just like a poor laborer devoting himself to mass production.

The members all realized that the large salary they would be making is no longer considered a lot of money.

"And if I want to, I could make it so that not a single label could release the album for the opera. Then your performance would be the only album out there."

The members all had trouble trying to hold back their laughter. A performance that will continue for dozens of years after. And just one album.

If it is a steady seller for that long, it is basically another pension. With just one recording.

"You can't be so happy about it already. We'll be working on it in this studio recording booth. It's not a performance on stage."

It took a while for them to understand what Jun Hyuk was saying.

"Here, there are a total of 10 people to take on 1st and 2nd violin."

Jun Hyuk raised his hand to motion to the violinists.

“If I only like the way one out of all of these people play, that person will end up playing 10 times. Why? Because it’s a recording. All we have to do is mix the 10 times they play. And that person will take all of the incentives of 10 people.”

The orchestra members had been too quick to be happy, and they looked like an audience watching a horror movie. Until now, most operas were recorded in performance and released as live albums.

If there is even a single person for each instrument in this recording booth that is like a performance stage, it would even be possible to record a choral symphony. This place is not a temple of music, but a coliseum that they need to survive.

When the conductor had said that they would sit on money if they withstood it, he was not just talking about them remaining as members. They need to survive as people with abilities up to standard to participate in the recording.

“A worse situation could come out. If no one is to my satisfaction, I will have no choice but to call in a violin soloist. Um... Daniel LaPierre, my friend and someone getting the most spotlight at the moment. He can come and record 12 times.”

There was a chill in the studio as if cold water had been thrown on them. How insulting are his words? He picked them and could end up not using them!

“This is not just with the violins. It is the same for all of the parts. I brought you all here with 3 times the salary of the Berlin Philharmonic. Is anyone here able to say that they are 3 times better than the Berlin Philharmonic in ability?”

The chill became a freeze with Jun Hyuk’s fastball. A symphony that can follow the Berlin Philharmonic will not come out right now.

“There are 2 years left until JS Center’s opening. My goal is to give a performance that is as great as – no – at least twice as great as that of the Berlin Philharmonic in 2 years.”

Everyone’s hair rose. This means that they will just practice rigorously for 2 years.

“It’s possible if you trust me and follow my directing. Of course that process will be more than 3 times as rigorous as that of the Berlin Philharmonic.”

Jun Hyuk came down from the podium and walked toward the open door.

“I can direct your performances but not your legs and feet. Anyone who does not have the confidence can leave through this door. We will pay you for the work you did today.”

No one rose from their seats. No one wants to leave this golden pond. Jun Hyuk smiled at them and got back up on the podium.

“Great. Then shall we get started? Everyone, open your scores.”

The members opened the score to opera , sitting on the music stands in front of them. The members were like gladiators battling to stay alive in a coliseum as they picked up their weapons. Their instruments.



While Jun Hyuk waved a carrot in front of the orchestra to whip them into shape, President Isaac Stern was more busy than he had ever been in his life.

“Oh my God! Mr. Stern, what are you doing all the way here?”

“Mr. Yoon, it’s been a while. I wanted a coffee from your cafe.”

Yoon Kwang Hun was surprised when he opened the cafe early in the morning and President Stern walked in. And he could guess that the man had not come to see him himself for something small.

President Stern had a coffee with Yoon Kwang Hun and enjoyed Jun Hyuk’s music as they exchanged greetings.

President Stern chatted for a while before handing Yoon Kwang Hun a thick document.

“What is this?”

“First, take a look. Let’s talk after you read through it.”

The documents recorded the complicated relationships of various companies, the flow of funds, and Jun Hyuk’s income in detail. Yoon Kwang Hun looked through them carefully and then put a cigarette in his mouth.

“This is impressive. What a map.”

President Stern would not have come all the way to Korea just to show him this map. Yoon Kwang Hun could already guess why President Stern had come to him.

Jun & Stern Foundation.

A foundation that possesses Isaac Stern’s personal shares of Stern Corporation, and shares for the record label and online distributor which will be newly established. A foundation that will be responsible for JS Center’s operations and tremendous funds.

The record label to be established plans to create Jun Hyuk’s music of course, but also the albums he will act as producer for, and music he will make for singers.

The offline distribution of music is working with existing distributors, but there will be a label dedicated to online music distribution.

The conclusion is simple. The foundation’s objective is maximizing revenue through Jun Hyuk.

The Beatles also created their own record label because they did not want to waste the money that was going to their former label. Their record label’s name is. Of course it has nothing to do with Steve Job’s Apple.

It was an era without online however, so Apple collapsed when existing record labels and distributors united to block the distribution of Beatles albums. The Beatles submitted to an existing large label again.

However, the situation now is moving in an entirely different paradigm that it was then. A music production company is just another name for an agency and management agency. They play the same role, and unity is no longer possible.

“Mr. Stern. This is a good plan, but isn’t it meaningless to Jun no matter how much you maximize his revenue?”

President Stern laughed.

“You’re right. Jun isn’t buying a castle in Europe or collecting artwork worth millions of dollars like other stars. He won’t say that he wants to buy dozens of super cars or islands in the South Pacific either. And it doesn’t seem like he’ll marry multiple times

and have to pay enormous alimonies like I did. Ha ha.”

“But why are you thinking of such a huge project?”

“Because it’s a waste.”

Chapter 262

“Excuse me?”

Yoon Kwang Hun’s paused with his coffee in his hand. It’s a waste?

“A large portion of what Jun makes goes to other companies. Where do you think they’ll spend the money they’re making because of Jun? It’ll become money thrown away for the whims of executives of music production companies and distributors.”

President Stern lit a cigar and started to talk about his vision.

“Wouldn’t it be better to spend that tremendous amount of money in Jun’s name? He could do anything. He could help third world countries, fund the development of music. Wouldn’t it be better to donate a piano to every elementary school classroom?”

“And that’s why you thought of a foundation. It’s an incredible idea.”

“I don’t know if you know, but the people joining this endeavor all have great characters. They will run the foundation with integrity and always think of something better.”

President Stern looked at Yoon Kwang Hun with his cigar in his mouth.

“Mr. Stern. Jun’s money isn’t something that I get involved in. You can discuss this idea with Jun and decide with him. It isn’t something to get permission from me for.”

Yoon Kwang Hun spoke plainly because he thought that President Stern was still under the impression that everything regarding Jun Hyuk needed to go through him. He is no longer Jun Hyuk’s guardian. And Jun Hyuk is not a child.

“Ha ha. Well well. You misunderstood me.”

President Stern blinked in confusion for a while because laughing.

“I didn’t come here to get your permission. As you said, it’s something that I can proceed with after talking to Jun.”

“Then why are you showing me this plan?”

“I wanted to ask a big favor of you. Will you become the Chairman of the Jun & Stern Foundation?”

Chairman? The foundation’s representative? His surprise upon seeing President Stern early in the morning had been nothing. Yoon Kwang Hun forgot that he was even holding a cigarette, and froze. What is this out of the blue?

“No matter how I think about it, no one is more appropriate than you, Mr. Yoon.”

“Mr. Stern. What are you talking about? I’m just someone who’s retired, enjoying coffee, wine, and music in this small cafe. But take on a foundation that will be moving billions of dollars? I can’t handle it.”

He was so surprised that he put his cigarette out in his coffee as he waved his hand.

“What do you mean common? You’re too modest. I know about your experience in Wall Street and Korea well.”

“That’s all in the past. I’m not like that now.”

However, President Stern’s expression did not change in the slightest.

“Will you listen to what I have to say?”

He lit his cigar again and spoke slowly.

“The foundation’s chairman needs to meet 3 conditions. First, not being greedy for money and being frugal. What I mean by greed here is that the person can’t be interested in money at all. The person can’t become greedy when there are billions on the line.”

It is a prerequisite that he needs to consider. Yoon Kwang Hun nodded.

“Second, having the ability and intuition to understand all movement just by looking at numbers on a document. We need to see it clearly if companies involved with the foundation are playing around with money. People in the entertainment industry are used to luxury and pleasure.”

President Stern let out a long puff of cigar smoke and laughed.

“There are people who think of parties full of models, singers, and entertainers all the time. They think of all of that as required expenses. It is something we need to tolerate to a point, but we need to be completely aware of the extent.”

“Mr. Stern, America is full of human resources. Won’t there be someone who meets those conditions? You’re thinking about this the wrong way because of the relationship between Jun and myself.”

“Of course. There are a lot of human resources. People with the right philosophy and mind of sacrifice. And it’d be possible to find a ton of people who are good at administration who are good with numbers.”

“Then that’s settled. There’s no reason that it has to be me.”

Yoon Kwang Hun sighed in relief, but President Stern was still laughing.

“The problem is that no one meets the 3rd and last condition.”

“What? A 3rd condition?”

“There are a lot of great people out there as you said, but no matter who we bring, they will think more of the foundation. How can we spend money in a place with more value? What method do we need to use when using money? Lastly, how can we grow the foundation?”

“Isn’t that inevitable?”

“No. There’s something to think about before that. It’s that we need to think of Jun before all of that.”

Yoon Kwang Hun closed his eyes. He finally realized the reason why President Stern is trying to make him the chairman.

The foundation must not come before Jun Hyuk. If the foundation comes first, an endless amount of money is needed. Not just the money made from companies affiliated with the foundation, but it is normal to get external contributions.

The best way to get donations is to put Jun Hyuk forward. It could become endlessly

bothersome. Jun Hyuk is the foundation's owner, but the chairman who is in charge of operations could think of Jun Hyuk as an affiliate company.

This is President Stern's concern.

Yoon Kwang Hun opened his eyes and spoke cautiously,

"Mr. Stern, you're the person most suitable for the chairman position. It's not me."

Doesn't he meet all of these prerequisites? Furthermore, didn't he invest Stern Corporation stocks and a huge amount of money? There is no better match.

However, President Stern looked at Yoon Kwang Hun in disbelief.

"Mr. Yoon, look at me. I'm an old man, already over 80. It wouldn't be weird if I died now. Going out to do something would be silly."

President Stern looked all over his body. His wrinkled hands, his white hair. He is an old man.

"If you don't accept, I'm not going to establish the foundation at all."

"That would be better. It's the choice of company officials if they want to waste the money they made through Jun by playing around with models. Not everyone needs to be moral. I don't have the right to pass judgement on other people's actions. Let's end this discussion here."

President Stern's smile grew when he saw how decisive Yoon Kwang Hun was. He really had picked the right person. Yoon Kwang Hun does not care about anything. Billions of dollars is just a number to him, and he will remain indifferent to that money. He became more entrenched in his thought that there will be no better person for the job.

President Stern took out a few documents from the manila envelope. It is the contract for Jun Hyuk and Stern Corporation's management.

"I'm sure you know, but the termination date for the contract was left blank."

"Yes. It's an incredibly reckless and free condition."

“Yes, it is reckless. It seems like a blank termination date is an advantage for the artist’s side, but it can be used in the reverse as well. I’m writing in a date to release the burden. If you don’t accept, that date will become today.”

Yoon Kwang Hun laughed in disbelief. This old man is really something!

“You’re incredible. I wavered. Ha ha.”

“This isn’t all. There’s more.”

“The decisive hit?”

“Of course. It’ll become the KO punch.”

Yoon Kwang Hun looked at another document that President Stern handed over, and was surprised for the 3rd time today. Then, he lit a cigarette without saying anything.

While Yoon Kwang Hun smoked, President Stern looked elated.

“It looks like I’ve won. With a KO.”

Yoon Kwang Hun put his cigarette out, let out a long sigh, and looked at President Stern.

“A small apartment in New York. You have to put an audio system of the highest quality in that apartment. Oh right. I can expense my costs for moving on the foundation, right?”



After the orchestra members gathered in the studio to practice everyday for about 1 month, their first result was revealed.

“We will begin recording for the opera ‘Godfather’ tomorrow.”

The orchestra members gulped. Will all of the members get to participate together? Or will there be people eliminated?

This moment was more tense than when they had auditioned a month ago.

“It is a pity, but there is a fair amount of people who do not meet my standards. And I matched these standards to those of other orchestras. The people who participate in the recording must keep in mind as well that they can be taken out at any time during the recording.”

This means that in the end, he only selected a section of them. The members all looked disheartened.

“The list for participants is hanging outside. And the recording period is 3 days. The people who will not be recording should practice individually for the 3 days. It is not a break.”

Jun Hyuk looked over the orchestra and said something even more shocking.

“Second clarinet.”

“Yes, Maestro.”

The clarinet player had his instrument in his hand and was startled when Jun Hyuk called on him.

“You’re fired starting today. The office will give you more detailed information. You worked hard until now.”

Chapter 263

“Does life turn out the way you plan? You looked better with a guitar or drums than you did with a baton.”

“But why are you here so suddenly? All the way to New York from LA?”

The 2 men hesitated before taking out their business cards to hand to Jun Hyuk.

“Huh? This...?”

“It was a decision to work with the great Jun. First, know that we’re not doing this because of the incredible salary. Ha ha.”

The business card said CEO and Chief Producer. The JS Foundation affiliate record label’s last selections were Alex Jenkin and Eli Gotez.

“Mr. Stern worried that it would become a label specialized in classical music. Our Maestro is working in all areas, so he wanted us to maximize the advantages.”

“I like it whatever the reason is. It’s uncomfortable for me to work with people I meet for the first time, too.”

“What is it? Then are you saying that your familiarity with us is more important than our qualifications?”

“Qualifications are important to someone like Isaac. I like people I’m comfortable with.”

It sounded like a joke, but the 2 men had nothing to say. He is right. There is no reason to be concerned with ability when he is able to handle all processes of producing a record.

“Anyway, I’m glad you’re here. I needed help with organization so you came at exactly the right time.”

“Organization? What?”

Jun Hyuk pulled files saved on the studio server up on the monitor.

“This is music I’ve been creating. I left the ones that need orchestration accompaniment separate. They’re complete other than those, so look at all of them and let me know what you think I should do.”

“What is this? Sing? Did you sing?”

Alex Jenkin pointed to a folder titled ‘Sing’.

“No. I played the singing part on the piano. The song can be sung according to that melody. They need work on lyrics, too.”

Eli Gotez checked the number of folders and his jaw dropped.

“64? I’m sure this means there’s a total of 64 songs?”

“Yes. I just made them as I thought of them, so I haven’t configured albums yet. You two can classify these songs, make them into album units, and bring on singers who fit them.”

With this many songs, they can make at least 7 albums. They heard that he had already created 4 albums... They could not even imagine how he was handling this incredible workload.

“What are you doing? You should hurry up and get started.”

“Now?”

“Of course. Call in the record label employees if you need to as well. You think Isaac is giving you a huge salary for nothing? This is a place where you need to get to work no matter what, starting on the first day. I don’t know how much you’re making, but you’re on the losing side.”



“This is Mr. Yoon. We brought him on as JS Foundation’s Chairman. And these are the people on the Board of Directors.”

Yoon Kwang Hun met the 4 people who would be directing the foundation with President Stern. They are well achieved in their respective areas and they have worked to create a better world than they have for their own wealth and glory.

As the 4 directors enjoyed the restaurant's steak and wine, they passionately debated the business JS Foundation would need to focus on going forward.

"Malaria is a bigger problem than AIDS in Africa. AIDS just gets more attention because it has spread to western society, but the death rate from malaria is actually overwhelming."

"That's why I'm saying we need to figure out the drinking water problem. Water is directly connected to hygiene. Since pipes are impossible, the best resolution for now are wells."

"We need to work on the expansion of medical staff as well. How long are we going to rely on volunteer work for? They need a salary at least to support their families. Even with just that, there will be more people applying to work."

While the directors were discussing the business that took priority to each of them, Yoon Kwang Hun said nothing, eating his steak and drinking his wine.

Yoon Kwang Hun finished eating, wiped his mouth, and turned to President Stern to speak.

"Mr. Stern. But are you sure these people are the foundation's executives?"

"Excuse me?"

The chatty 4 people also stopped talking at Yoon Kwang Hun's obvious provocation.

"Ordinary businesses all think about how they can make money. On the other hand, foundations like us think about how to spend money. But isn't it strange? A foundation isn't a bank, so doesn't someone need to make that money? Does that money fall from the sky?"

"Aha. It seems the Chairman doesn't know JS Foundation's structure yet..."

One of the directors laughed and spoke, but he was unable to finish his sentence.

“No, I know it well. Mr. Stern and Jun put up the base funding and aren’t we operating on that money?”

“And Maestro Jun promised to donate a lot of money every year. In addition, a large portion of profits from the foundation’s affiliated businesses will come in as funds.”

“Aha, so you’re saying that we don’t need to worry about making money.”

Yono Kwang Hun snapped his fingers and spoke as though he just realized it, making the 4 directors’ faces brighten. President Stern’s stony face however, did not relax. Isn’t this all what Yoon Kwang Hun already knows?

“Then I’ll ask again. If we don’t need to worry about money, aren’t executives unnecessary? The business team brainstorms and plans out how to use money. Then are the 4 directors here and I just in our positions to give approval? Our salaries seem to be pretty big.”

None of the directors could respond. It is a reproach about whether they are going to be in their positions without working.

“Listening to you all today, it seems you would fit better on the business team than as directors. You’re full of thoughts on how to use the money in a better way for better causes... There is no one more eligible for the foundation’s business team.”

The directors’ faces flushed. They worked on the business teams of various foundations until now. They are people who have cried with starving people in barren lands and people suffering from diseases. And they know too what the role of a foundation’s director is.

“A foundation’s director needs to bring in money from outside or become an investor, one or the other. That means this needs to be a person who makes money. Isn’t this the most basic concept?”

One person who could no longer bear to listen to Yoon Kwang Hun say the obvious, laughed and spoke up.

“I’m sorry Mr. Yoon, but to my understanding, you’re someone who doesn’t fit into either category either.”

“That’s not something you should be concerned with. The Chairman is appointed by

the investor, and Mr. Stern who invested in this foundation appointed me. I just evaluate the directors as the Chairman. I can assess you four, but no one here other than he can assess me. Are you now thinking of overstepping your authority?"

Yoon Kwang Hun's voice had gotten a little higher and it pricked their consciences.

They thought that he had put in the Chairman position solely because he is Jun Hyuk's father. And President Stern committed him as someone who would check the flow of funds completely.

Looking at it now however, isn't he saying that he will completely play the role of Chairman? The 4 directors kept their mouths shut at Yoon Kwang Hun's firm tone.

"Let's get up since it seems like we're done eating. And I hope you'll think about it deeply. Whether you're going to fulfill all of your responsibilities as directors, or if you'll work on the business team. I'll hear that response tomorrow."

Yoon Kwang Hun looked at the 4 people without moving, and they slowly got up to leave.

President Stern had been watching them without saying a word, and let out a low breath.

"I misjudged you, Mr. Yoon."

"Didn't I tell you a little while ago? The person who can assess me is you as an investor. You can fire me whenever you want to."

"That's not what I meant. I thought you were just a sleeping bull but now that you've come out of the pen, I didn't realize that you were a savage beast. Ho ho."

"Then shall I go back into the pen?"

President Stern shook his head.

"I'm quite a happy old man. I got something wrong, but that was a treasure chest. Now not only the son, but the father will get involved to surprise me, so could there be a more joyful ending period to my life? Ha ha."

President Stern laughed for a while.

“But those 4 people are people we need. Meet with them again.”

However, Yoon Kwang Hun lightly shook his head.

“Mr. Stern. A foundation doesn’t need to scout talent.”

“Excuse me? What does that mean?”

“Social activists look for places where they can act on their ideals. If their ideals are different, they don’t move even for money. If they move with money, they are already salarymen and not activists. We don’t need salarymen. If our foundation’s ideals are high, the talent will automatically come to us.”

The relaxed cafe owner did not show in this Yoon Kwang Hun, full of confidence.

“Let’s push back organizing the board. We don’t even know if rich people who are synchronized with our intents will demand director titles once the foundation is formally launched. Let’s leave the positions empty for them and wait.”

“Mr. Yoon, it looks like you’re not going to move in the way I talked about.”

“No. I’m going to move exactly the way you talked about. I’m not going to burden Jun, and the foundation needs to use its own power to create business. I’m going to push that to the limit, too.”

“What does the limit mean?”

“Money always needs to be lacking for the business started. That way, we’ll do our best to raise the necessary funding and the staff will make more effort to save on expenses. A rich life makes everyone lazy. And laziness will bring the foundation to collapse.”

President Stern’s jaw dropped. He did not know that he would ever hear this lazy man say such a thing!

“Which is the real you? Cafe owner? Or the foundation chairman who’s saying all of this incredible stuff right now?”

“Is any person just one thing? They’re both the same person.”

Yoon Kwang Hun drank the rest of his wine and smiled.

Chapter 264

It had been long since Jun Hyuk had seen Dario Argento, but he was still lively. He never made a public appearance after the premiere of opera 'Godfather' so it was hot news that he was in New York.

He only had one response for the reporters pouring questions on him at the airport.

"Opera 'Godfather' is my last performance and the album I'm working on with Maestro Jun will be my last album. I will not be coming out with anything from now on."

He is the only person who could know if the reason why he declared that his last voice is the opera 'Godfather' is a marketing tactic to raise album sales.

When Argento arrived at the studio, his jaw dropped at its size.

"A full orchestra? No, it's bigger."

"It's big enough to accommodate a chorus as well."

"Well well. Are you intending to become secluded in here? Like a dragon locked up in a dungeon. Ha ha."

"I intend to be that dragon for the 2 years until JS Center opens."

"What about that incredible orchestra? Is it good enough as your instrument?"

Argento knew about his recruitment of orchestra members, since it made noise all over the world.

"We're tuning it first. There's a lot to fix up."

"Really? I'm sure we'll be able to tell when we're recording."

These are songs that he is singing for the first time in over a year, but Argento did so well that he got the OK sign from Jun Hyuk in one go. It was clear that he had practiced a lot with the recording ahead of him.

The short time period of a year brought a lot of change to the old man. His voice got rougher and it made a metallic sound. This kind of voice is more like that of an old mafia's.

Opera viewers, who had been unable to hear Argento's singing, will listen to the album and think it a pity that there will never be a casting so perfect for the role.

Unexpectedly, the entire recording process took over 6 months. All of the singers had different schedules, so it was difficult to gather people for their duets and trios.

Even 6 months was only possible by recording singers and working on the mixing separately. If they had done it properly, it would have easily taken over 1 year.

For 6 months, Jun Hyuk not only worked on the opera album, but he produced a total of 4 albums. The 3 musicians who made his ears perk up while he was vacationing in Switzerland, the musicians who arranged Jun Hyuk's album to release albums.

The female singers from England and America, and the rock band from Northern Europe's Finland put lyrics to the music that Jun Hyuk made for them and flew to New York.

"The lyrics are in English."

"Yes, Maestro. It'd be stupid to put Finnish lyrics to such an amazing song."

The Finnish rock band did not want to miss this perfect opportunity to get out of their country and become known worldwide, so they put English lyrics in for all of the songs.

"Hm... I liked the special characteristics of Finnish. And I did compose the music with that in mind."

They all became uncomfortable. If they receive this maestro's touch, they are bound to become stars.

Didn't the media compare them to Cinderella as well? They were given media attention for the first time with just the fact that they received Maestro Jun's music.

But they cannot keep playing around in Finland's small market.

“Sing in your mother tongue so you can deliver your message exactly. Even if people in other countries can’t understand the lyrics, they’ll get your sincerity.”

“Maestro, our English is perfect too. There isn’t a language barrier.”

They cried out quickly. They want to become like the global band from Finland, Nightwish.

They were dreaming of becoming the 2nd Nightwish, placing on Finnish charts for half a year whenever they release albums and selling out world tours.

And it felt like they had their hands on the door to achieving this dream now. But they can’t use English?

“You’re still foreigners. I’m sure you can write, speak, and hear in a different country’s language perfectly. But in order to express your personal deep area, the mother tongue is better. You didn’t write the lyrics without thinking, did you? And I’ll say it again, but I fell for the Finnish language.”

“But Maestro, in order to get your great music out to the whole world, isn’t it better to use English?”

The band members made great effort to persuade Jun Hyuk, but Jun Hyuk grew even colder.

“I think you’ve misunderstood... but I don’t care whether your band reaches worldwide stardom or the best band in Finland. I gave you the music and proposed creating an album because I wanted to bring out your musicality, potential power, and the zest of your language.”

All of the band members could not respond to Jun Hyuk’s determinedness. They realized what they had mistaken. The young maestro is not a star making producer like Quincy Jones. He is someone who does not care about anything beyond creating perfect work like popularity or money.

“Either come back with Finnish lyrics or let’s just say this didn’t happen. Since I’ve prepared the airline ticket and hotel, take a tour of New York and go back.”

“Oh, no. We’ll rewrite the lyrics in Finnish.”

They quickly shouted out while waving their hands.

“I’ll extend the time that you stay in the hotel. Take your time and create great lyrics. Then.”

When the band members left with their shoulders slumped down, Jun clucked his tongue.

“Kids don’t know what late bloomers are.”



The last record was Colin band’s 2nd album. Once the world tour was over, Alvin Lee went back to his hometown. He is a musician who plays the blues with just an acoustic guitar and his voice in a small theater for 2 hours every night.

Countless agencies gave him calls to sign on with them during the tour, but he refused all of them.

“I’m still a drug addict. I’m just restraining myself. The life of a big star will inevitably test my resolve, and I don’t have the confidence. I don’t want to start snorting cocaine again.”

He chose the path of seclusion.

Jun Hyuk looked over the score and demo CD that Colin gave him, and did not hide his admiration.

“Great. You’ve even become tasteful and restrained now. There really is a difference after swimming in big waters.”

“Todd’s influence was big. It’s not the Colin band anymore. It’s just Violon.”

“What can I do for you?”

“Will you be the producer? Just like this without arranging it.”

Colin showed his confidence. It could become better with Jun Hyuk’s arrangement, but it is also his will to show their own music.

“You know I’m really expensive, right?”

“I hope you have a good alumni discount.”

Jun Hyuk laughed and Colin put his hands together to ask politely.

All of the albums including Colin’s will be released through JS Music, an affiliate record label that will be established under JS Foundation.

Until JS Foundation’s official launch next February, Jun Hyuk was busy with producing music and training his orchestra, while Isaac Stern was busy focusing on establishing the foundation.



The sound engineers were unable to spend their time idly at the studio even on days when there were no official album recordings. Jun Hyuk recorded the orchestra’s practice sessions everyday, compared the sound heard through speakers and the sound heard in real life, and tuned the equipment.

When orchestra practice ended in the giant recording booth, Jun Hyuk was always recording something while playing the drums, guitar, and synthesizer by himself.

They even had to spend all night working whenever the hard disk was completely full with music files and they needed to mix the tracks according to the order Jun Hyuk gave them.

Songs ranging from guitar riffs that are easy on the ears, drums with concise tempo, to symphony rock songs that are over 10 minutes long, kept stacking up without indication of where they would be used.

Today without fail, Jun Hyuk played alone in the recording booth. When he came out, 2 people were waiting for him.

“Alex! Eli! Goodness.”

LA Sound’s top producers Alex Jenkin and Eli Gotez bowed to Jun Hyuk in exaggerated noble gestures.

“My Maestro. It’s an honor to get to meet you like this again.”

“What is this? Stop playing around and get up.”

The 2 men straightened their backs and hugged Jun Hyuk.

“We thought you’d become the leader of a top band like U2 or Metallica, but you went beyond our imaginations. Who knew you’d become Beethoven?”

He realized that a lot of time had passed by looking at them. Alex Jenkin’s sharp eyes had become gentle and Eli’s hair was starting to grey.

“No way. I was a Clayton-Hoffman student at the time. I was more in classical music than a band.”

Chapter 265

Yoon Kwang Hun and President Stern focused on their work with the foundation. President Stern in particular, was intent on creating a last big blast and mobilized his entire network.

That blast however, did not go for long. He fainted at a fundraising event and was taken to the hospital. Jun Hyuk was contacted that President Stern had fainted and was about to go to the hospital right away, but Tara held him back.

“You can’t meet him anyway. He’s in a coma, so he’s not allowed visitors. The hospital said they would call us after a thorough examination, so let’s just wait.”

The call they waited for, came after 10 days. For those 10 days, Jun Hyuk had not been able to do anything and was just checking his cellphone. All he could think about was what if President Stern was leaving the world without even saying goodbye.

When Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun rushed to the hospital, they went through the doors to a VIP ward and heard the spirited voice of President Stern that they were so used to.

“Oh, Jun. Good, you’re here. Save me. I’ll die within 10 minutes if I stay here with these women.”

There were 4 women next to President Stern, from one woman who looked to be past her 70s to a woman who looked to be in her 30s.

When the women saw Jun Hyuk, they gave President Stern light kisses and left the ward.

“Isaac. Are you okay? How do you feel?”

“Ack! Jun! Look behind you!”

When President Stern suddenly yelled, Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun looked behind them in surprise. But all they saw was the closed door to the ward.

“Why? What is it?”

“He he. Neither of you will be able to see it, but I can see the Grim Reaper holding a big sickle.”

They let out sighs of relief. He’s joking even at a time like this? However, his words also had meaning beyond a joke.

President Stern is facing his death confidently.

“What is this? You’re totally fine. The Grim Reaper must run away because he’s surprised.”

Yoon Kwang Hun laughed in disbelief as well.

“But who were those woman just now?”

“Oh, my ex-wives. They all came running here because they heard that I’m dying.”

When they had come through the door, the room had been full of the sound of laughter. It was difficult for Jun Hyuk to understand because he thought that ex-wives would have the attitudes of enemies.

“What? There was one woman who looked to be in her 30s. She wasn’t your daughter?”

On top of that, there had been a woman too young to have been married to a man over 80. It would have been more appropriate to say that she was his granddaughter.

“No. Is she 32 now? She was my last wife. Was she 23 when she married me? Or 24?”

Yoon Kwang Hun grabbed his head. It is hard to believe that this hearty old man is in critical condition.

“You’re on good terms with your ex-wives. What’s the secret?”

“There’s really nothing to it. You become good friends if you give them much more in alimony than they were expecting. Jun, keep that in mind. Don’t hold back on money when you get a divorce from Amelia.

“I haven’t even gotten married yet.”

They are supposed to laugh, but the laughter does not come out. He spoke up slowly instead.

“Did the test results come out?”

“They did. They kept me tied up here for 10 days – there better be results.”

Jun Hyuk could not ask about the results. President Stern did not say anything either, and just smiled bitterly. Yoon Kwang Hun however, glared at President Stern as he spoke.

“I can’t believe whatever the results say. The report on the diagnosis you sent me while I was in Korea said that you had 6 months at most. But weren’t you fine for over a year? The results now are the same. You’ll live for another 10 years at least.”

“What? You saw it a year ago?”

Jun Hyuk looked at Yoon Kwang Hun in surprise.

“That’s why I took the position as Chairman of the foundation. I thought it’d be a big deal if Mr. Stern passed away all of a sudden.”

He finally understood why Yoon Kwang Hun had come flying to New York so suddenly. He was someone who never interfered and got involved.

“But you’ve been fine for over a year. Isaac, hurry up and get discharged. This hospital’s just full of quacks. We can’t believe them.”

President Stern shook his head.

“It’s real this time. The doctors said something about my illness, but the name of it was so hard I can’t remember it. Damn, there are so many diseases.”

“It isn’t any incurable, is it?”

“Of course it is.”

Their smiles disappeared. An incurable illness for someone of that age means he is a terminally ill patient. He basically has a death sentence.

“There’s one thing I know clearly of the endless amount of illnesses out there. And it’s the most fatal. It’s age. Aging.”

Time is the incurable disease that no one can avoid. Isaac Stern knows that he is standing on the end of that time.

“I’ve lived a long life. I’ve lived more than 80 years, so that’s enough.”

President Stern smiled brightly. It looked like he is entirely satisfied with his life.

“But it’s a relief, right? If I had died before meeting you – no – if I hadn’t had the chance to be your agent, I would have died without experiencing that miraculous moment, wouldn’t I have? I watched everything with my two eyes without missing anything, so no one is as fortunate as I am.”

President Stern held Jun Hyuk’s hand tightly and spoke to Yoon Kwang Hun.

“Mr. Yoon, it’s the same with you. It could have been that I lived longer because I had the chance to work on the foundation with you.”

“We’re the fortunate ones. Isaac, we’re living while doing everything we want to because of you.”

Everyone thought of the first times they met each other, and got lost in the memories of the past. It was like pulling out the memories of someone who is about to die.

“But why are we talking as though I’m going to die at any moment? Look here. Stop!”

Yoon Kwang Hun looked at President Stern shouting, and clucked his tongue.

“From the way you’re speaking, it looks like you’ll live at least 10 more years. You’ll get married another time, too.”

Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun left the ward, worrying about President Stern who was having difficulty breathing. The path to meet his doctor felt long and their footsteps were heavy.

“I can’t make any promises. He’ll lose consciousness several more times going forward and if he can’t wake up... there’s nothing our medical staff can do.”

“You don’t know the minimum term for survival?”

“He could lose consciousness and pass away even now. The only thing I can tell you for sure is that he won’t be able to make it past 1 month.”

They left the doctor’s remarks of cautious confidence behind and left the hospital.

“Jun Hyuk. There’s 4 months left until the opening ceremony for JS Center, right?”

“Yes. But before that.....”

“Yeah, we’ll need to. He needs to see his incredible heritage before he closes his eyes.”

They had tears in their eyes as they sat in the limousine.

“The large theater is complete, right?”

“Yes. There’s no issue putting on a show in that theater. The small theaters aren’t ready yet.”

“Then there won’t be a problem for the opening ceremony show. The problem is preparing for the song.”

“It’s impossible to be ready within a month. The song is complete, but I heard that the ballet troupe has just finished casting.”

It had been President Stern’s idea to put on a ballet for the opening ceremony show. It was to show that JS Center is not just for music, but a comprehensive space for art.

XBC (Xavier Ballet Company), which is currently recognized as the best in America, showed a lot of interest in Jun Hyuk’s first ballet song. They brought on choreographer Matthew Powell, who is the top choreographer of modern dance.

Matthew Powell is an Englishman, praised for being the choreographer to lead the 21st century with his unconventional choreography of Romeo in jeans and Juliet in a miniskirt.

“Then we have no choice but to put a different piece on stage.”

“I’ll prepare the show, so don’t worry about it.”

“Alright. I’ll take care of the other problems.”

The other problems Yoon Kwang Hun is talking about include getting XBC’s understanding, explaining the situation to the VIPs invited to the opening ceremony to let them know about the sudden change in date and asking them to attend. This includes Belgium’s Queen Matilda.

Yoon Kwang Hun made various calls to give out orders, while Jun Hyuk’s phone rang.

“Jun, it’s me.”

“Maestro Carras.”

“I heard you just left the hospital. Are you on your way back to the studio?”

“Yes, Maestro.”

“Then can you make some time for me? There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

“Of course. Shall I go to Lincoln Center?”

“No. I’m sure you’re much busier, so I’ll go to JS studio. I’ll leave now.”

Dimitri Carras’ voice could not hide his anxiousness.

Chapter 266

When articles about JS Foundation's official launch came out, the focus was not on the foundation but on the funding and Jun Hyuk's income.

It is partly because the foundation's detailed business information had not been released yet so they did not have much material to write about, but it was mostly because the amount of initial funding was incredible and most of that had come through Jun Hyuk.

The details of the contributions were what could be considered Isaac Stern's entire life savings, 42% of Stern Corporation stocks, affiliated businesses including a record label, JS Center, and lastly, the \$2 billion that Jun Hyuk invested.

Jun Hyuk is at the center of all of this. Forbes magazine already announced musicians' incomes and with an annual revenue reaching over \$2.5 billion, he even earned the nickname of One Net Company.

A Forbes article that described it as the only company that can grow 100% annually, ended with a last line briefly mentioning that JS Foundation might be able to receive more than \$2 billion in donations from Jun Hyuk every year, garnering much interest.

JS Foundation's homepage became covered in comments requesting aid, and the office phone rang constantly.

After the foundation's official launch date, business team leaders, the 4 directors who were appointed as temporary directors, and Chairman Yoon Kwang Hun held a marathon meeting to decide on their first order of business.

They debated passionately again regarding their claims to the ideal business and priority issues, but everything was urgent from an objective viewpoint.

Everything from medical treatment, drinking water, food, housing, animal protection for endangered species, and even support for music and art fitting to Jun Hyuk and Stern's names were discussed.

Yoon Kwang Hun only listened quietly for a few days until no new projects were

brought up before finally speaking up.

“I heard your opinions well until now. But there’s still a question that has not gone away.”

Yoon Kwang Hun slowly got up and slowly paced the conference room while exchanging looks with everyone.

“Aren’t they businesses that the super rich like Bill Gates and big corporations have poured money into for decades? But why hasn’t the situation in Third World countries improved? The death rate is actually increasing. Isn’t that true?”

“Well that’s because everything until now have just been temporary measures. Unless the respective countries become politically and economically stable, these are issues that can never be resolved. Charitable foundations will just forever be temporary measures.”

“But it is because those temporary measures exist that millions of people survive.”

“A foundation cannot get involved in a country’s internal affairs.”

The people participating in the meeting came forward to respond to Yoon Kwang Hun’s question, but the 4 directors did not speak. They have already experienced Yoon Kwang Hun. They know that the Chairman did not ask because he does not know, and it is just an introduction to bring up his opinions.

“Right? We’re just a temporary measure. Countless foundations are working on being that temporary measure right now. But do we need to do it too? Can’t we get a little closer to the fundamental problem?”

“Chairman. It looks like you have something you’d like to say... We’re listening.”

One of the directors spoke up cautiously. Yoon Kwang Hun frowned.

‘That guy. This needs to go according to scenario to have dramatic effect... He’s cutting it short.’

Yoon Kwang Hun coughed twice, went to the whiteboard, and wrote a word with an exclamation point.

HIGHWAY!

When he put the pen down, some looked bewildered, some looked astonished, and some just looked confused.

The directors let out long sighs and spoke as they shook their heads.

“Chairman, that’s just a dream.”

“Everyone’s thought about it at least once, but it’s work that everyone’s given up on. Realistically...”

“Realistically... Yes. That’s an important word. Realistically.”

Yoon Kwang Hun cut the director off and quietly smiled.

“I’ll let you in on an ugly reality. Will you listen to me and tell me your thoughts?”

Yoon Kwang Hun wrote numbers on the board. The first number he wrote was 100.

“If a foundation with \$1 billion in funding is established, do you know where the greatest cheers come from?”

African refugees? Doctors Without Borders? UNICEF? They each came up with different groups in their heads.

“It’s Wall Street. The \$1 billion funding will go into Wall Street and they’ll operate that money. And they’ll make business with just the proceeds since they can’t use all of the fundings.”

Once the foundation distributes the money into bonds, stocks, and funds as investments, business starts with the proceeds.

“The people on Wall Street raise and lose tremendous amounts with this money. And they throw it anywhere. And that’s 2 to 4% of the proceeds. The place that profits most is Wall Street.”

Yoon Kwang Hun thought of his past and smiled bitterly. He played with funds like this countless times, and the money he made was much more than the amount that was used as funding.

Yoon Kwang Hun wrote the number 2 in front of the 100.

“Isn’t it so ridiculous? There’s \$1 billion, but you can only use about \$20 million every year. And the attainment rate is only 10%. There’s going to be the unbelievable transformation of \$1 billion to \$20 million.”

The last number was 0.2.

Attainment rate is when someone donates \$10 and there is a value that the relief case receives. A 10% attainment rate means that when a charity foundation donates \$10, ailing refugees would receive \$1 in aid.

That is because of the enormous cost to transport. There is no path to the remote wild of Africa. There are also a lot of places where workmen must be hired to carry it on their backs.

If there are landslides and rivers that cut the path off, emergency medicine needs to be transported by helicopter. Often times, there is the ridiculous situation where \$1,000 worth of medicine needs to be transported for \$20 million.

Yoon Kwang Hun wrote HIGHWAY because he is saying they should create that path.

“Chairman. Then are you saying that instead of operating our foundation’s funding, it should all be poured into clearing up roads?”

“Yes. Let’s start with the \$200 million that Jun gave us in cash. And let’s put in all of the funding we get every year. There’s no way we could do it with \$20 million, but we can start if we have \$200 million.”

He means to construct roads all over the African continent. But \$200 million can only begin the project.

A heavy silence lingered in the conference room. To think of such a reckless business. Yoon Kwang Hun broke the silence.

“Let’s start being honest. Do you think no one started this because there isn’t enough money?”

There were people whose faces turned red.

“We can’t brag about building roads, can we? They only look at the logo and name on the box of relief goods they hold in their hands. They could never know the existence of JS Foundation.”

It is also a reason why enterprise foundations do not like road construction. It is human instinct to want not just the right hand but the entire body to know what the left hand is doing. Enterprises cannot help but think about image enhancement.

“Let’s think about the results. If bridges and roads are created, there will be significant savings in transport costs. Attainment rates will raise to 50%. Malaria vaccines will increase by fivefold. Food support will increase by fivefold.”

“But we don’t have nearly enough funding for that. No matter how much money we pour into it, we won’t see results.”

“Do you think a network of roads throughout an entire continent can be achieved through us alone? We need to start it and gather people who share our thoughts. That is ultimately what our JS Foundation will need to do.”

The meeting participants thought of the term ‘ideal mind’.

They are people who dream of an ideal society. It felt like they had rediscovered a term that reality had been pushing away.

“Then what do you think about starting with research? We can look into the details of the areas that are most urgent first.....”

“Of course. It’d be a mistake to push through recklessly. Putting a complete plan together comes first.”

Yoon Kwang Hun quietly watched the directors share their thoughts and nodded. This much means that he has achieved his goal.

It is enough that he has planted the seeds in their minds that HIGHWAY is not an impossible project that they cannot even look at.

If he slowly persuades them and advances step by step, it will become a dream and goal that they all share.

6 months from the day that Yoon Kwang Hun first brought up HIGHWAY, JS

Foundation's official announcement set the world abuzz again.

".....Our JS Foundation could construct a 10,000 mile road and stop the project because we run out of funding. Then, we believe that someone will share in our thoughts and follow suit to help us advance even 10 more miles."

Yoon Kwang Hun explained the project in front of countless reporters and bowed his head, after which the reporters did not hesitate to applaud him.

President Stern was also in the conference room, and realized again that he had made the right choice. This Korean father-son duo had made his older years the most plentiful and honorable.

When this project became known via the media, the top people of Africa did not hesitate to express their gratitude toward JS Foundation's decision and they began to sign on in order to support the cause in any way that they could.

As Yoon Kwang Hun had expected, wealthy people from all over the world who were in agreement with their plan began to donate funding.

It is a moment in which ideals are becoming reality.

Jun Hyuk watched Yoon Kwang Hun's press conference from the studio recording room. He burst out in laughter and shook his head.

"You really can't stop him."

Jun Hyuk knows where Yoon Kwang Hun's project began. An American TV show! He remembered an overwhelming scene.

He is executing a project that has so many realistic barriers that it can be included in a dramatic TV show. It is reckless, but he is someone who is difficult to hold back.

Chapter 267

Yoon Kwang Hun and President Stern focused on their work with the foundation. President Stern in particular, was intent on creating a last big blast and mobilized his entire network.

That blast however, did not go for long. He fainted at a fundraising event and was taken to the hospital. Jun Hyuk was contacted that President Stern had fainted and was about to go to the hospital right away, but Tara held him back.

“You can’t meet him anyway. He’s in a coma, so he’s not allowed visitors. The hospital said they would call us after a thorough examination, so let’s just wait.”

The call they waited for, came after 10 days. For those 10 days, Jun Hyuk had not been able to do anything and was just checking his cellphone. All he could think about was what if President Stern was leaving the world without even saying goodbye.

When Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun rushed to the hospital, they went through the doors to a VIP ward and heard the spirited voice of President Stern that they were so used to.

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There were 4 women next to President Stern, from one woman who looked to be past her 70s to a woman who looked to be in her 30s.

When the women saw Jun Hyuk, they gave President Stern light kisses and left the ward.

“Isaac. Are you okay? How do you feel?”

“Ack! Jun! Look behind you!”

When President Stern suddenly yelled, Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun looked behind them in surprise. But all they saw was the closed door to the ward.

“Why? What is it?”

“He he. Neither of you will be able to see it, but I can see the Grim Reaper holding a big sickle.”

They let out sighs of relief. He’s joking even at a time like this? However, his words also had meaning beyond a joke.

President Stern is facing his death confidently.

“What is this? You’re totally fine. The Grim Reaper must run away because he’s surprised.”

Yoon Kwang Hun laughed in disbelief as well.

“But who were those woman just now?”

“Oh, my ex-wives. They all came running here because they heard that I’m dying.”

When they had come through the door, the room had been full of the sound of laughter. It was difficult for Jun Hyuk to understand because he thought that ex-wives would have the attitudes of enemies.

“What? There was one woman who looked to be in her 30s. She wasn’t your daughter?”

On top of that, there had been a woman too young to have been married to a man over 80. It would have been more appropriate to say that she was his granddaughter.

“No. Is she 32 now? She was my last wife. Was she 23 when she married me? Or 24?”

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“You’re on good terms with your ex-wives. What’s the secret?”

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“I haven’t even gotten married yet.”

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“Did the test results come out?”

“They did. They kept me tied up here for 10 days – there better be results.”

Jun Hyuk could not ask about the results. President Stern did not say anything either, and just smiled bitterly. Yoon Kwang Hun however, glared at President Stern as he spoke.

“I can’t believe whatever the results say. The report on the diagnosis you sent me while I was in Korea said that you had 6 months at most. But weren’t you fine for over a year? The results now are the same. You’ll live for another 10 years at least.”

“What? You saw it a year ago?”

Jun Hyuk looked at Yoon Kwang Hun in surprise.

“That’s why I took the position as Chairman of the foundation. I thought it’d be a big deal if Mr. Stern passed away all of a sudden.”

He finally understood why Yoon Kwang Hun had come flying to New York so suddenly. He was someone who never interfered and got involved.

“But you’ve been fine for over a year. Isaac, hurry up and get discharged. This hospital’s just full of quacks. We can’t believe them.”

President Stern shook his head.

“It’s real this time. The doctors said something about my illness, but the name of it was so hard I can’t remember it. Damn, there are so many diseases.”

“It isn’t any incurable, is it?”

“Of course it is.”

Their smiles disappeared. An incurable illness for someone of that age means he is a terminally ill patient. He basically has a death sentence.

“There’s one thing I know clearly of the endless amount of illnesses out there. And it’s the most fatal. It’s age. Aging.”

Time is the incurable disease that no one can avoid. Isaac Stern knows that he is standing on the end of that time.

“I’ve lived a long life. I’ve lived more than 80 years, so that’s enough.”

President Stern smiled brightly. It looked like he is entirely satisfied with his life.

“But it’s a relief, right? If I had died before meeting you – no – if I hadn’t had the chance to be your agent, I would have died without experiencing that miraculous moment, wouldn’t I have? I watched everything with my two eyes without missing anything, so no one is as fortunate as I am.”

President Stern held Jun Hyuk’s hand tightly and spoke to Yoon Kwang Hun.

“Mr. Yoon, it’s the same with you. It could have been that I lived longer because I had the chance to work on the foundation with you.”

“We’re the fortunate ones. Isaac, we’re living while doing everything we want to because of you.”

Everyone thought of the first times they met each other, and got lost in the memories of the past. It was like pulling out the memories of someone who is about to die.

“But why are we talking as though I’m going to die at any moment? Look here. Stop!”

Yoon Kwang Hun looked at President Stern shouting, and clucked his tongue.

“From the way you’re speaking, it looks like you’ll live at least 10 more years. You’ll get married another time, too.”

Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun left the ward, worrying about President Stern who was having difficulty breathing. The path to meet his doctor felt long and their footsteps were heavy.

“I can’t make any promises. He’ll lose consciousness several more times going forward and if he can’t wake up... there’s nothing our medical staff can do.”

“You don’t know the minimum term for survival?”

“He could lose consciousness and pass away even now. The only thing I can tell you for sure is that he won’t be able to make it past 1 month.”

They left the doctor’s remarks of cautious confidence behind and left the hospital.

“Jun Hyuk. There’s 4 months left until the opening ceremony for JS Center, right?”

“Yes. But before that.....”

“Yeah, we’ll need to. He needs to see his incredible heritage before he closes his eyes.”

They had tears in their eyes as they sat in the limousine.

“The large theater is complete, right?”

“Yes. There’s no issue putting on a show in that theater. The small theaters aren’t ready yet.”

“Then there won’t be a problem for the opening ceremony show. The problem is preparing for the song.”

“It’s impossible to be ready within a month. The song is complete, but I heard that the ballet troupe has just finished casting.”

It had been President Stern’s idea to put on a ballet for the opening ceremony show. It was to show that JS Center is not just for music, but a comprehensive space for art.

XBC (Xavier Ballet Company), which is currently recognized as the best in America, showed a lot of interest in Jun Hyuk’s first ballet song. They brought on choreographer Matthew Powell, who is the top choreographer of modern dance.

Matthew Powell is an Englishman, praised for being the choreographer to lead the 21st century with his unconventional choreography of Romeo in jeans and Juliet in a miniskirt.

“Then we have no choice but to put a different piece on stage.”

“I’ll prepare the show, so don’t worry about it.”

“Alright. I’ll take care of the other problems.”

The other problems Yoon Kwang Hun is talking about include getting XBC’s understanding, explaining the situation to the VIPs invited to the opening ceremony to let them know about the sudden change in date and asking them to attend. This includes Belgium’s Queen Matilda.

Yoon Kwang Hun made various calls to give out orders, while Jun Hyuk’s phone rang.

“Jun, it’s me.”

“Maestro Carras.”

“I heard you just left the hospital. Are you on your way back to the studio?”

“Yes, Maestro.”

“Then can you make some time for me? There’s something I want to talk to you about.”

“Of course. Shall I go to Lincoln Center?”

“No. I’m sure you’re much busier, so I’ll go to JS studio. I’ll leave now.”

Dimitri Carras’ voice could not hide his anxiousness.

Chapter 268

“Jun, what about JS Center’s opening ceremony.”

“Yes, we decided to hold it earlier. Within a month.”

“Thanks. Isaac will be really happy too.”

“It’s nothing. Of course we should do it.”

When Carras came to the studio, his eyes were puffy and they were tearful. He has walked through life with Isaac Stern. They are lifelong companions and friends. It could be that Dimitri Carras is the saddest person right now.

“I’m sure you’ll need to change the opening performance?”

“Yes. The ballet won’t be possible. We’re thinking about what song we need to do.”

“I actually asked to met because I wanted to talk about that. Will you do me a favor?”

“What? What favor?”

“Do you know what music Isaac loves most?”

He thought it would be a question he could answer easily, but he could not think of the answer.

Isaac Stern is a person who loves music, but the music he loves most? It seems like he has never thought about it or talked about it.

When Jun Hyuk could not respond, Carras smiled slightly.

“Why? Don’t you think it’s your music?”

“I don’t know. Nothing stands out in my mind because of the word ‘most’. But I don’t think it’s my music.”

“Ha ha. Isaac worshipped your music since you appeared at the end of his life.”

Carras paused for a moment and spoke quietly.

“The music that has accompanied Isaac throughout his entire life has been Schubert.”

“Franz Schubert?”

He had not guessed this. Isaac’s character and behavior are bold and grand, but he loved Schubert most when his music is calm as an admirer of Beethoven?

“He’ll have listened to Schubert’s Symphony No. 8 in B minor, Die Unvollendete every day without fail.”

Schubert followed in Beethoven’s footsteps as a romanticist and developed it more. He is so great particularly in German music that his achievements are unfinished. However, he died at 31, at a younger age than Mozart who died at 35.

His talent showed freely in not only vocal songs but also in symphonies, but the song with the most popularity is “Die Unvollendete”. The beauty of the melody that appears in this symphony is so melodious that it is not an exaggeration to say that it is a heavenly song.

Symphony No. 8 is named “Die Unvollendete” (“The Unfinished”) because classic-romantic symphonies are generally configured in 4 parts, but this song is the only one that ends after just 2.

After Schubert’s death, respect for his music increased and there was increased attention for his works. In 1865, Vienna’s conductor Johann Helberg discovered this unfinished score and held its premiere in December of that year.

In the score that Schubert left, 3 parts are composed in 9 measures and the rest of the parts seemed to be sketched out to some extent on the piano, so he must have been trying to configure it in 4 parts like other symphonies.

But why did he only write until the 2nd part and then throw his pen away? There is no decisive evidence to solve this riddle. There are various theories, and even an absurd claim that says Schubert suffered from extreme forgetfulness and he forgot to compose the rest after writing 2 parts.

Currently, the most probable theory is that Schubert said everything he wanted to in these 2 parts and put his pen down with genius-like intuition.

Since the 20th century, many musicians and scholars hung to this song's completion. People like Frank Merrick, Gerald Abraham, and Brian Newbould arranged the song with Schubert's draft as a foundation to complete the normal 4 part system.

But only the 2 parts are performed in most shows. It is because the completion is remarkable.

The famous 1st part's melody is often used in movies or dramas, and is used in the TV animation 'Smurf' whenever Gargamel's dreary house appears.

Jun Hyuk could tell why Dimitri Carras had rushed here. He is here to ask Jun Hyuk for a favor.

"You haven't conducted Schubert's 'Die Unvollendete' yet, right?"

"No. Not yet....."

"If you who he worships most plays the song he loves most, won't that become the greatest last gift?"

When Carras said the word 'last,' tears began to flow again.

Jun Hyuk embraced him and pat his back.

"Let's do that. I'll prepare the best gift. Thank you, Maestro."



"I'm sure you already know, but the opening ceremony will be earlier. And the program will change."

None of the orchestra members had a problem with the sudden change. It is a reason that anyone could understand, and everyone thought that it was a definite.

It is just that they hoped that brutal conductor would choose an easy song for the short amount of time they have left.

“We’ll be doing Schubert’s symphony, Die Unvollendete.”

The orchestra members’ faces brightened. It is a piece that they have practiced at least 100 times since they started playing their instruments. They thought it an appropriate choice for the tight schedule that they are on.

“We have 15 days. Please work hard so that we can bring out a perfect performance in that time.”

The orchestra thought that 15 days would be plenty, but thought it strange once they received the scores that Jun Hyuk passed out. The score of a symphony that is only made of 2 parts is a bit thicker.

“It’s not ‘Die Unvollendete’ this time. I composed until the 4th part. It falls short a lot because I wrote it quickly, but don’t curse me too much for ruining the piece.”

He is not just speaking out of modesty. He wrote the song quickly within 2 days, and he himself was not satisfied. But it was a choice he had to make because he does not have time.

“We need to finish the 1st and 2nd part over 3 days. That should be enough, right?”

The orchestra members were already not listening to their conductor. All they wanted to do was look through the 3rd and 4th parts, but they had to push it back because their conductor had already lifted his baton high.

“Get used to the 3rd and 4th parts on your own over 3 days through individual practice.”

The allegro part began with Jun Hyuk’s baton. When it went over to andante within moments, the orchestra members looked at each other.

Why isn’t this picky conductor nagging at them?

He did not say a word during the 1st part, when they are playing it together for the first time.

Schubert’s music runs with a storm-like delightful feeling until that melody goes toward serenity. And only the 1st violin played toward an octave leap inside that stillness without an accompaniment. It is the best part of the 2nd that shatters the listening person’s expectations.

Schubert repeats these 4 with a faint sound and brings the listener to heaven.

“Wait. Pianissimo again for just the violin!”

The violin part gulped. How many times will they hear ‘again’ today?

“So weak we’re not sure if we can hear it or not. But the sound can’t die or drag along slowly. You have to leap the octave so the audience doesn’t feel that it is hard or painful.”

He only gave the okay sign twice. The hand with the bow accepts the conductor’s demands before the head does.

It is a strange practice that the orchestra members cannot understand, but it changed their arms, hands, fingers, and mouths before their minds. Their bodies are reacting with familiarity rather than playing with understanding.

The 80 orchestra members sitting in the recording booth had become the perfect instrument, playing the way Jun Hyuk wants them to.



On the day of JS Center’s opening, Jun Hyuk went to President Stern’s ward.

“Oh, you still look fine. You’re still cool.”

President Stern was in a suit, sitting in a wheelchair and waiting for Jun Hyuk. His robustness however, was gone and all that was left were bones. People age quickly when they accept death and wait.

His energy is already so low that he cannot endure the treatments. It could be that he lasted this long just for this day.

“You said there are going to be a lot of Hollywood actresses at the opening ceremony today, right? Who knows? I might get my 5th wife. Ha ha.”

His loose limbs may be colorless, but there is no change to his lively spirit.

“Stop marrying now. You’re going to waste tons of money on alimony again? Just date.”

“What? You make lots of money for me. I’m not even scared of Angelina Jolie.”

“That woman hasn’t gotten divorced yet.”

Jun Hyuk and Yoon Kwang Hun joked around with President Stern as they left the hospital.

Jun Hyuk arrived at JS Center and pushed President Stern’s wheelchair once they got out of the limousine. A magnificent ancient Greek shrine was in front of them.

“What do you think? Isn’t it awesome?”

“Yeah. It’s much greater than the aerial view.”

President Stern looked at the magnificent hall in admiration. The proof that he lived in this world is in front of him. This magnificent building, the foundation, and Jun Hyuk. All of these are traces of him.

When Jun Hyuk pushed the wheelchair toward the music hall, the hall’s delicate beauty came into clearer view.

“Oh... That?”

Chapter 269

President Stern's jaw dropped when he saw the logo and name written boldly on the center's building.

"I changed the construction a bit. Fortunately, the architects assured me that it wouldn't be too difficult."

The music center's name is not Jun & Stern.

Isaac Stern Center.

When he saw that his name is the only one on the building, he turned his head.

"Why'd you do this? You took your name out?"

"Instead, the large theater's name is Jun's Hall. That's plenty for me. And I'm thinking of making a few centers that only have my name on them. This is too simple, and it isn't fitting for my name. It needs to be 3 or 4 times bigger than this."

President Stern did not stop crying even with Jun Hyuk's joke.

"Alright, let's go in. Wipe your tears. If Angelina Jolie sees you, she won't even come near you because she'll say you're whining."

"Angelina Jolie didn't come. She's in Spain to film her movie. You think I don't even know that much?"

Jun Hyuk looked at the back of President Stern's head as he stole tears, and pushed him to the Isaac Stern Center.

"I knew it. Why did you make the opening ceremony earlier when construction isn't even done yet?"

The small theaters inside the center are still covered in white cloth.

"The large theater is done. And the banquet halls and facilities like cafes are complete.

Only 3 medium and small theaters are left, so it's fully functioning."

President Stern looked disgruntled, but Jun Hyuk laughed.

"We're going to clear the white cloth away when the guests arrive. No one will notice. Why are you being like this when you like it?"

"But....."

President Stern sounded uncomfortable. He wanted to see the center in its complete state.

"If you can say for sure that you'll live 4 more months, I'll cancel it."

"4 months? That's going to be a little hard. He he. Oh right. You can't cancel. Didn't you say the president is coming as well?"

"Yes. He should have arrived at JFK right about now. But I was really surprised. I never imagined that you knew the President."

"Know him? I don't. I've never met the President. And the President is a Democrat. I'm a Republican supporter. I don't even like him."

President Stern frowned. He is remembering the Republic loss during last year's elections.

"But why is he attending?"

"I heard he's a big fan of yours. I heard that he loves your piano sonata in particular. The President himself plays the piano a bit as well. Oh right, I heard that he was after rumors of your piano playing skills. He wants to hear it for himself."

"There's nothing you don't know for someone who is staying in a hospital ward."

"You're the only one who doesn't know. The President said this a few times during interviews. He was hoping you would hear. He he."

Jun Hyuk giggled for President Stern to hear.

"It's a pity. He he."

“Why?”

“I don’t have the right to vote because I’m not an American citizen.”

President Stern realized that Jun Hyuk was unable to vote for the President, and clapped in joy. He headed to the banquet hall like a child.

When he entered the banquet hall, President Stern’s old friends were waiting for him. Many maestros including New York Philharmonic’s Dimitri Carras surrounded him and congratulated him.

Their sadness did not show in their faces and they treated him as the healthy and lively Isaac Stern instead of an old man.

The VIPs began to gather in the banquet hall one by one. Hollywood stars came in with Director Martin Scorsese, Al Pacino, and Robert DeNiro at the lead, with New York’s mayor and senator following behind.

When Belgium’s Queen Mathilda entered however, they were all pushed to the edge. Queen Mathilda gave President Stern a light kiss on the cheek, congratulated him on the opening, and went to Jun Hyuk.

Jun Hyuk put his lips to the back of the queen’s hand, and the queen whispered quietly into Jun Hyuk’s ear.

“If you want, you can create your own concert hall in Brussels in Belgium. Think about it.”

She is clearly confessing that she is Jun Hyuk’s fan. When Jun Hyuk was about to thank her, it became noisy outside the banquet hall.

President of America, Butler, was walking into the hall faster than his bodyguards.

He smiled wide when he discovered Jun Hyuk and tried to run over to him, but his secretary general whispered to him, making him quickly change his steps.

“Mr. Stern, congratulations. This is the first time I’ve been in such an incredible music hall. Now, the Isaac Stern Center will represent New York instead of Lincoln Center.”

“My body is not well as you can see, so I’m sorry that I cannot get up, Mr. President.”

“It’s nothing. I hope you recover quickly.”

President Butler could guess just from President Stern’s expression that he is an ardent Republican.

“Oh, my Maestro. We finally get to meet.”

“Mr. President.”

The President held Jun Hyuk’s hand tight and did not let go, bursting out in laughter.

“I’m asking in advance, but will you attend the White House year end Christmas dinner party?”

“I heard you’re supposed to spend Christmas with your family.”

“Of course your entire family needs to come with you.”

The President hugged Jun Hyuk and whispered to him,

“I could step down from my presidency right now if I could play a piano duet with you, Maestro.”

The President is such a fan that he wants to play the piano with Jun Hyuk.



Jun Hyuk, President Stern, the President, New York’s mayor and senator, Belgium’s Queen Mathilda, and New York Philharmonic’s Dimitri Carras cut the tape and the President’s speech followed.

He talked about Isaac Stern’s devotion behind the maestros and ended by appreciating Jun Hyuk’s hard work.

“.....Now instead of going to Avery Hall to listen to Beethoven, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky, we can come here to the Isaac Stern Center to appreciate newer and unconventional masterpieces. Maestro Jun will be waiting for you as someone who will leave greater footsteps than Beethoven, Mozart, and Tchaikovsky left behind.”

Isaac Stern went up onto the dais after the President’s introduction.

“I’m telling you in advance President, but I did not vote for you during last year’s elections. But my mind is changing now. If you run again during the next election, I will give you my vote. Oh right. I don’t think think I’ll be alive until then.”

Not only the guests, but the President laughed loudly.

Isaac Stern started his speech as a joke, but ended by showing his gratefulness and praise for Jun Hyuk.

“...It is meaningless that Maestro Jun is of Korean nationality. It is also meaningless that he is living in New York. It is meaningless that he is Asian. He is an earthling and a true Santa Claus, giving a gift to all mankind.”

President Stern gestured to Jun Hyuk with his hand, and applause exploded.

“Humanity needs to repay him. There are now 2 things that mankind needs to protect and guard. It is the Earth and Maestro Jun.”

It was the only part of President Stern’s speech that was made known through the media.

Jun Hyuk became something that all of mankind needs to protect.



The first program of the opening ceremony was the documentary on Jun Hyuk that Martin Scorsese made. The documentary filmed the entire process of creating the opera ‘Godfather,’ and it was interesting that they could get a glimpse into Jun Hyuk’s process of making music.

The improv performance in a small cafe in particular was enough to bring out the audience’s admiration because even if they could not understand, the rhythm characteristic of Italian caused fine changes in expression and buried a page of a score.

Jun Hyuk had been watching the documentary from box seats on the 2nd floor for more than 10 minutes before he slowly stood up.

“Why? Where are you going?”

“It’s weird to see myself on such a big screen. I’ll be in the studio until it’s over.”

Jun Hyuk went down to the empty studio, put a few pages of sheet music on the desk, and looked at them for a moment.

‘Should 10 songs be enough?’

The sheet music began to be filled with notes. After about 1 hour, Jun Hyuk looked over the scores again and smiled satisfied.

When Jun Hyuk left the studio and went back to the large theater, the documentary was nearly over. A few scenes from the opera were going by rapidly on the screen.

“Did Amelia go somewhere?”

“To prepare to perform. She’s probably backstage.”

“Then I’ll go prepare as well.”

Jun Hyuk held Isaac Stern’s hand tightly and then left the box seats. Amelia and the orchestra were chatting backstage.

“Jun, where did you go?”

“The studio. When is the documentary over?”

“The R/T is 90 minutes, so it should be over soon.”

Jun Hyuk kissed Amelia lightly on the cheek and walked toward the orchestra.

“This is your first performance. How do you feel?”

The orchestra felt light excitement and tension, but they looked bright and did not seem to feel uneasy.

“I’m not sure. Somehow, I feel more comfortable than I did during rehearsals with you, Maestro. Ha ha.”

Chapter 270

The orchestra members recalled the terrible past 2 years. They were more tense everyday than they were for performances as they waited for the conductor inside the studio, and hung onto individual practices without enough time to sleep.

However, there were things that they could not endure as well.

The theater was under construction, so it was understandable that they could not hold performances. However, their conductor created a new song each month. They expected to work on recording the songs even if they did not hold performances, but all he did was to release the scores.

It is Jun Hyuk's orchestra, but they have never played Jun Hyuk's song.

Other orchestras performed and recorded Jun Hyuk's songs as soon as they came out. When this ridiculous condition continued, the orchestra's dissatisfaction reached its extreme.

When 1 year passed, the orchestra members could no longer endure it and brought the bandmaster forward to tell him all of their complaints.

"Maestro. Are we not qualified to play your songs? Or does our ability fall short compared to other orchestras? How could you do this to us?"

"Of course not. I don't think that you all fall short in ability."

Jun Hyuk accepted the orchestra's complaints as though they were nothing.

"But how can we be the only ones who don't perform your songs, Maestro? We're your orchestra."

"You just said the reason. It's because you're all my orchestra."

The orchestra members kept sighing because of Jun Hyuk's hard to believe words.

"The songs that I release are ones that I am not satisfied with, but they are songs that

the public will like. Also, there are a lot of orchestras that are able to perform them even if you don't."

The orchestra members became even angrier. Why is he handing songs that the public will like, over to other orchestras?

There is no issue if they release the album first and then reveal the score.

"I want you to play music that I am satisfied with. And I'm sorry to say this, but you're a little insufficient to play the songs that I would be satisfied with."

The bandmaster remembered something when he heard Jun Hyuk bring up music that he would be satisfied with.

"Are you by chance thinking of Inferno?"

"No. I gave up the thought of performing Inferno early on."

Jun Hyuk laughed and waved his hand. He got locked in his thoughts for a moment and took the baton in his hand.

"Um... Let's do this. It'd be fastest to explain with music. Alright. Beethoven Symphony No. 5, Fate. You all have the score, right? Get ready."

The members were surprised when he brought up Beethoven so suddenly, but they were excited just by the fact that they could get away from their strange practices.

They rushed to get the score out of their bags.

"I'm telling you in advance. If you're all satisfied, we'll work on recording the album right away."

The orchestra became excited at the mention of working on an album. They were sick and tired of only practicing to the death. Now was the time to see the results.

And Jun Hyuk's Beethoven, which they had never seen before.

The orchestra got fully prepared and then focused on the baton.

When the 1st part was ending in a bold introduction, Jun Hyuk put down the baton

and only looked at the orchestra.

The orchestra members' faces were stony. Jun Hyuk saw this and smirked as he spoke,

"You'll all know very well that the songs that I've released until now aren't more outstanding than this Fate symphony. But what do you think?"

None of the orchestra members spoke up. Jun Hyuk needed to answer his own question.

"It's not that fun, right? You can't feel the happiness of performing, the joy of being in concert, right?"

The members kept their silence. That silence also meant that they agree.

Jun Hyuk did not stop smiling, and spoke in a low voice.

"If you play the songs that I've released, it will be more boring. Then, do you still want to release an album?"

Jun Hyuk looked at the orchestra members who were still unable to respond, and left the recording booth.

"Damn it. How did we get like this?"

One of the members shouted out in disbelief.

"No wonder. I haven't been feeling much inspiration when I listen to music."

"I'll say. I even thought that Mozart is too light."

"Right? I was the same. Mozart is a bit frivolous... Beethoven is heavy but feels like it doesn't fall out of its own category?"

When each person started to speak up, they even started to judge Mozart and Beethoven. But everyone became quiet again when one person spoke up.

"Damn is right. We'll have to quit thinking about being able to move to another orchestra."

They could not shake the uneasy feeling that they could no longer play regular classical music.



“Think lightly of today’s performance and just hang on to the warm thoughts. It’s just a gift for one person.”

The members nodded. If they do not forget the thoughts they are sending a respectable man facing death, the performance is a success.

Amelia’s piano sonata ended and there was a short break. The audience enjoyed the refreshments laid out in the lobby and waited for the last order of the day.

When the audience went back to their seats, chairs for the orchestra and a podium were set up on stage.

The program introduction only states Jun Hyuk and his orchestra’s performance. There are no details. Most thought that they would be able to hear Jun Hyuk’s new songs, and were full of anticipation.

When orchestra members appeared on stage with Jun Hyuk following behind them, the audience’s cheering grew louder.

Isaac Stern also lifted his lean hands and clapped with strength.

Jun Hyuk bowed to the audience and held up the microphone in his hand.

“I believe that a man’s life is similar to writing out notes on sheet music. One person’s actions, words, thoughts, and his relationships with others. In that, they have influence and are influenced. All of this becomes notes and are drawn out on sheet music.”

Jun Hyuk looked at Isaac Stern sitting on the 2nd floor.

“When we play the notes that are filled out like that, someone’s life becomes a fascinating melody and someone else’s becomes a noise that is hard to listen to. Like Inferno.”

Laughter came from the audience. Isaac Stern and Dimitri Carras in particular were

twice as loud and long as others.

“However, all scores have a similarity. A feeling of regret lingers after the last note is written. It’ll be because people wish they could write out greater notes.”

The audience could tell who Jun Hyuk is talking to, and turned their heads to look at the day’s star, Isaac Stern.

“Lingering regret means it’s unfinished, but music can be evaluated as masterpieces because of that regret. Schubert’s Symphony No. 8 Die Unvollendete is like that.”

Cheering and applause came from the audience. They knew what performance would come next.

Isaac Stern forgot to clap for Jun Hyuk’s surprise show, and could not close his mouth. Dimitri Carras watched this from his side and held Isaac Stern’s thin hand tightly.

When the sound of clapping died down, Jun Hyuk went on speaking.

“For today however, it is not Die Unvollendete. We are taking off the tag ‘unfinished’ so that it’s just Die Vollendete. He is my manager, my friend, and someone who is like a grandfather to me. Like Isaac Stern’s life.”

Jun Hyuk raised his hand to gesture to Isaac Stern, and the audience including the President and Queen Mathilda stood up to clap passionately for Isaac Stern.

Isaac Stern, who was sitting in the box seats, got up from his wheelchair with difficulty and responded to that sound.

“1st part Allegro moderato. 2nd part Andante con moto. 3rd part Scherzo, Allegro. 4th part Allegro vivacissimo.”

When Jun Hyuk stated until the 4th part, the audience members’ jaws dropped. They thought that saying the incomplete is complete is a way to show Isaac Stern respect.

But to think that he really completed Schubert’s song?

The reporters who had not been able to enter the hall with their cameras were full of regret. To think that they cannot record this historical moment.

When Jun Hyuk stood on the podium and turned his back to the audience, the inside of the theater became completely silent.

When the white baton started moving, the cello and contrabass played an introduction of a heavy and solemn atmosphere and the violin rode an uneasy accompaniment for a sad melody from the woodwinds.

There was a short silence after the orchestra's tutti, and then the cello sang the 2nd theme. These 2 themes tangle with each other to show that music is a tragic deployment as they swell up.

When the 1st part was over, the maestros occupying the VIP seats needed to breathe heavily.

How on earth are they able to perform without a single shaky note? More than half of the members did not look at the score properly, and only looked at the end of the baton.

The ideal orchestra that maestros dream of.

Chapter 271

An orchestra that can bring out music with just the fine movements of his eye and baton.

While over 80 orchestra members acted as Jun Hyuk's fingers for more than 10 minutes, they did not show a single irregularity.

One maestro shook his head. A performance like this is impossible even with endless rehearsals.

It is not a performance that is possible through practice. It is only possible if each member is trained individually. But to train musicians with strong pride?

There is not a single musician who is willing to withstand a whipping just because of a high salary. An orchestra is a group, but each member is his own universe.

Each musician is someone who plays his own instrument.

As the maestros looked at the stage in disbelief, Jun Hyuk's baton began to move again.

When the lyrical 2nd part ended with an irregular 3-part form, everyone held their breaths. What kind of Schubert will a great maestro with a perfectly tuned orchestra show them?

When the first verse flowed out, the eyes of the maestros in the audience grew wide.

It is different. Completely different.

The score that Schubert left behind is composed until the 3rd part 9th verse, and the rest is generally sketched out on piano.

Average people don't know well, but maestros remember this precisely and most have even performed it.

The dreamlike chord and bass in piccicato however, was entirely Jun Hyuk's music. Jun Hyuk ignored the score that Schubert never finished writing, and was performing a

completely new Schubert.

A pleasing theme came out through the violin and the theme kept developing. The violin's quiet melody worked with the oboe and clarinet to play a sweet song, and the audience yelled out 'Schubert!' subconsciously.

The song's atmosphere changed for a moment with the oboe expressing a longing as though aspiring to something, and they returned to the 1st theme again to end with the 3rd part.

There was the sound of light sighs coming from everywhere a tension relaxed. Isaac Stern enjoyed the aftertaste of this new Schubert with his eyes closed and waited for the last part.

Allegro's 4th part started and introduction's sad song and sweet and flexible melody shook his heart and passed through the audience's heart as though Schubert came back from a long vacation to show them the music on stage as the inside of the theater filled with joy.

The audience felt like they had been chosen by Schubert. Schubert coming back after 200 years to perform on stage himself. They feel as though they are watching that performance.

It was an affectionate whisper in the gentle and familiar language of love, and also a melody that captures the human spirit with endless love.

It did not make the mistake of forcing romance too much to lose convention, and it was classical without being too rigid of a rendition.

It was a very high performance on top of solid German tradition, maintaining the external convention that Schubert's piece has while expressing the rich nuances of the inner aspect of the melody through emotion.

It is very romantic overall and Jun Hyuk's music, which is overflowing with poetic mood, shows Schubert's melody flowing as though springing out of the underworld.

When they finished playing until the 4th part, Isaac Stern, who loves and understands Schubert more than anyone else does, could tell the true meaning of that Jun Hyuk's gift holds.

Jun Hyuk had accepted the pending death and embellished the travel to eternal rest beautifully.

Jun Hyuk gifted Isaac Stern with a companion so he would not be lonely in his eternal travel. He had given a gift in the form of Schubert that contains his heart.

Jun Hyuk turned on the podium to face the audience, and the name 'Schubert' rang throughout the theater with enthusiastic applause.

When Jun Hyuk came down from the podium, a staff member quickly gave him a microphone.

"I won't worry whether I dirtied Schubert's name. This is something I started with full determination."

The audience shook their heads vigorously and started to clap again.

"I felt it while performing. This song is obviously incomplete stylistically but by content, it is not in any way incomplete. That essence of this song is here. Like that someone's life."

He is saying that today's performance was the perfect tribute. And the subject is Isaac Stern himself.

A few elderly audience members had eyes full of envy. It is envy for this last gift he received – a Schubert song that will never appear again.

"Dimitri. If my life is the 2nd part, meeting Jun was the 1st part and everything after is the 2nd part."

Isaac Stern held onto Dimitri Carras' hand tightly as he spoke.

"What? Then what about me? It wasn't me dominating the 1st part?"

"He he. You're something like the main theme of the 1st part? About that."

As they laughed for a while, the curtains slowly came down on stage.



Once the official program was over, the Isaac Stern in the party room looked young again. He kept laughing while surrounded by Hollywood actresses, and occasionally showed his bad hand manners.

The President needed to go back to Washington because of his busy schedule, and held onto Jun Hyuk while making his last appeal.

“Maestro, you promised me. You have to attend the year end ceremony at the White House. Got it?”

“Mr. President. I need to hold a year end show here, too. I’ll try to adjust my schedule, but I can’t guarantee anything.”

Jun Hyuk handed a roll of paper tied with ribbon over to a disappointed President.

“I don’t know if I can give you this instead.”

“What is this?”

“A piano song. It’s a total of 10 songs, so play it in the order they’re numbered. If you play them perfectly until the 10th song, I’ll hold a special performance. I’ll bring you in as a pianist in this large theater. You’ll play a duet with me.”

The President smiled more widely than he had when he was announced as the next President on election day.

The maestro wrote songs just for him and even promised that they would go on stage together. More surprising was what Yoon Kwang Hun said.

“Mr. President. This is the first time Jun’s handwritten score has been leaked out. The scores for these piano songs are the first.”

The President’s Secretary General must have understood the scores’ value as well because he chipped in.

“Mr. President. Right now, Maestro Jun’s handwritten score is similar in value to those of Mozart. I don’t know much, but it’s enough to get museums all over the world calling you for those scores.”

The President embraced Jun Hyuk.

“If I fail in the re-election, that will all be your fault, Maestro. I would have neglected my duties to the state to practice these songs.”

The President held the scores in his hand as he walked away with regret, as the night of the party ripened.

And after 1 week, Isaac Stern left the world.



Isaac Stern. He was a giant iceberg. If the tip coming out above the water is a musician, he was the one hiding his giant body while sustaining the person on top from under water.

My friend Isaac was humorous and positive, an elegant man who loved music. It was also part of his charm that he was an old man who liked beautiful women.

The over 100 musicians he found are now playing fascinating melodies all around the world and his companion, friend, Maestro Jun who is like a grandson, is covering the world with his music.

He did not keep a single cent in his hand, and gave it back to society. He gave everything away and is going back into the earth.

Dimitri Carras gave the eulogy at his funeral, which was held in a New York cathedral. And he left his last words.

“I hope you have a chance to say your last goodbyes to Isaac Stern, who was a friend to us all.”

As people said their goodbyes to Isaac Stern, Dimitri Carras conducted the JS orchestra.

Schubert’s unfinished symphony flowed throughout the cathedral. It is a requiem for Isaac Stern.

The people who attended the funeral formed a line in front of the coffin in order to see Isaac Stern in his death.

Everyone cried and prayed for him.

Jun Hyuk put a score inside Isaac Stern's coffin. It was the 3rd and 4th parts to Schubert's unfinished symphony.

This song was made just for Isaac Stern and it was a declaration that he would never play it again.

Isaac Stern was buried in the Isaac Stern Center Park.



People who leave the sadness of someone who has left them, must go on living. Just as happiness does not last forever, neither does sadness.

Before Jun Hyuk could completely erase his sadness over losing Isaac Stern, he wanted to bring happiness to someone who is alive.

"Jun. This is too grand of a birthday party."

"It's not a party. It's a birthday present."

"Whether it's a gift or party, it's still too much."

Tara and Amelia looked happy as well as they listened to how well Jun Hyuk's plan worked out. It was even better that they were able to forget about Isaac Stern's death even for a moment.

"And there's no change to the fact that you deserve a tremendous birthday present."

The 2 women nodded in agreement. Yoon Kwang Hun really is someone who deserves it.

"Anyway, I'll look into a performance that matches up perfectly."

"I'll look into a few performers and ask them, too. I'm sure I'll be able to mobilize a fair number of them."

"Amelia, Tara. Tell them that I'll compensate them fully for my gratitude. Then I'll make a show that wasn't there before."

“Compensation? How?”

“Tell them that they can use my music in any way that they want from now on. I won’t take royalties.”

“What? You’re giving up royalties?”

Being able to use Jun Hyuk’s music as much as they want just by doing him a favor once. It seems that if they don’t pay the royalties that come with the number of performances and record sales, everyone will come out to try to get involved.

“Yeah. We need to show at least that much sincerity.”

Tara looked at Jun Hyuk smiling brightly, and let out a low whistle.

“Whew. This isn’t just a grand present, but an incredibly expensive one. It’d be much cheaper to buy and gift an island in the South Pacific.”

“Whatever. I’ll leave it to you. Tara, Amelia.”

“There won’t be any problems with conditions like these. Don’t worry.”

The 2 women took out their cellphones and started calling different places.

Chapter 272

“Sir, come to the house. You’re turning 60 tomorrow. You should get your birthday dinner.”

“Hey kid. Who gets a birthday dinner for turning 60 these days? They get the feast when they turn 70 or 80.”

Yoon Kwang Hun started complaining as soon as he heard ‘60’. He is now in his heydays again, so he does not want to admit that he is in his 60s.

“Ugh. An adult needs to admit he’s gotten older. He he.”

“Did I say something about it? It’s sad enough that I’m getting older, but I need to check that fact with my own eyes? Let’s just eat at a restaurant. 49 days haven’t even passed since President Stern’s death.”

“This isn’t Korea, it’s America. And Isaac is Christian.”

“I’m just saying. It’s not time to get a birthday dinner yet.”

Jun Hyuk waved the hidden card that would get Yoon Kwang Hun to stop being so stubborn.

“Amelia and I are doing the cooking ourselves. Forget me, but if you don’t eat the food Amelia prepared, you won’t be able to handle the blow back after.”

When Yoon Kwang Hun heard that Amelia will be making the food herself, he jumped. If he says that he won’t go, she is someone who will go to him at that moment and drag him away.

“Ugh, you’re such a bother. Alright. I’ll go.”

“Come tonight. Since tomorrow’s your birthday, sleepover and have some seaweed soup in the morning.”

“I said alright! Hang up.”

Yoon Kwang Hun yelled and hung up the phone. Jun Hyuk put down the receiver and giggled.

“Why? He’s not coming?”

“Of course not. He’s just being like that for no reason. He just wants it to feel like he’s coming over reluctantly because he has no choice. Korean men are kind of like that.”

The 3 people were gathered under one roof for the first time in a while as they got drunk off of wine and chatted away to their heart’s desire. Yoon Kwang Hun could not believe that it has been 15 years since he met Jun Hyuk.

The boy who had gobbled down tonkatsu, is now a maestro standing at the top of the world. And he put him at the head of a giant foundation.

A lot of thoughts passed through Yoon Kwang Hun’s head and they fell into a deep sleep under the influence of alcohol and relaxation.



Yoon Kwang Hun opened his eyes to the smell of Korean food he was smelling for the first time in a while. When he drank a cup of water to ease his hangover and went downstairs, Amelia had her nose blocked with all of the windows open and Jun Hyuk was nowhere to be seen.

“What’s Jun doing? All of the soup is gone.”

Yoon Kwang Hun turned off the boiling pot first.

“He’s talking to the President.”

“The President?”

“Yes. Since he gave him the piano songs, he calls everyday. He always asks about the parts that are hard to play.”

Amelia is sick of the President who calls everyday and shook her head. When Jun Hyuk shuffled into the kitchen, Yoon Kwang Hun started by yelling.

“What smells so fishy? What is this?”

“You like fish seaweed soup. That’s why I put it in, but.....”

“Ugh. Is this seaweed soup? You made fish stew! Why did you put so much fish in?”

He could barely see any seaweed, and there were just 2 fish heads the size of a person’s arm boiling inside the pot.

Yoon Kwang Hun only had 2 spoonfuls of the seaweed soup, and then ate the soup and salad that Amelia made instead.

After a light breakfast, Yoon Kwang Hun was sitting in the living room and lighting a cigarette when Jun Hyuk and Amelia came out with a pretty cake.

“What is that? A cake first thing in the morning? You’re supposed to eat something like this in the evening. I’m so hungover. I feel sick just looking at it.”

“If it’s 10:00 in New York, it’s midnight in Korea. It’s your birthday in 5 minutes on Korean time.”

“You’re doing all kinds of weird stuff. This early in the morning.”

The smile spreading across his face however showed that he was not only displeased.

“Alright. Now let’s open your birthday present. Wait for it.”

Jun Hyuk turned on a screen taking up a wall of the living room. The screen showed an orchestra under the stage and curtains that had yet to go up as though relaying an opera show.

“What is this? My birthday present is just watching a performance? And through a screen at that? Isn’t this the Internet?”

“Yes. It’s broadcasting live over the Internet. Don’t rush me and just wait. There’s still 1 minute left.”

Jun Hyuk started the countdown on his fingers.

At exactly 10:00 when it became midnight on Korean time, the stage curtains went up.

All of the opera cast members were standing up in the middle of the stage.

“What opera is it that all of the singers are coming out at the same time? Huh? Isn’t that opera ‘Godfather’?”

As it is an opera he watched many times, Yoon Kwang Hun was able to tell right away what the show would be just by looking at the stage set and singers’ costumes.

When the orchestra conductor’s baton began to move slowly, all of the opera singers started singing in chorus.

Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday to you.

Happy Birthday Dear Father.

Happy Birthday to you.

The singers finished singing and left the stage as they waved to the camera. Soon after, two gun shots rang and the real opera began.

Yoon Kwang Hun pointed to the screen and stuttered,

“That... That... That song... wasn’t for me, was it?”

“It was. It’s the Italian Napoli Opera. They sang the birthday song right before their show just now. What are you doing? You need to blow out the candles.”

While the opera singers sang in chorus, Jun Hyuk lit the candles on the cake and brought it out in front of Yoon Kwang Hun.

Yoon Kwang Hun was not able to blow out the 6 candles in one go. He was unable to let out a long blow because he cried out in the middle.

“You can’t be like this already when this is just the start of the present.”

When he barely blew the candles out, Jun Hyuk put the cake down and hugged Yoon Kwang Hun.

“Happy birthday, father.”

Jun Hyuk stopped calling him ‘sir’ as he had done for the past 15 years. And he said ‘father’ for the first time.

He thought of Yoon Kwang Hun as his father from the beginning until now but Yoon Kwang Hun himself always said that he has no right to be called his father as he set their relationship.

Jun Hyuk’s calling him ‘father’ means freedom for Yoon Kwang Hun. The two of them defined their relationship and it meant that after today, he had decided what he would call Yoon Kwang Hun regardless of his thoughts.

Emotional Amelia cried more than Yoon Kwang Hun did, so he pat her back as he spoke,

“There there. Stop that now. We need to enjoy the opera. It’s my birthday present. It’s nonsense that we shouldn’t be able to watch it because of something like tears.”

After 1 hour passed, the opera’s 1st act came to the end. Suddenly, the screen turned off.

“What is it? Did the Internet get cut off? Why isn’t it coming out?”

“Hang on. It’s the next present.”

When the screen became bright again, the orchestra came on.

“What is this all of a sudden? What about the opera?”

“This is London, England. The BBC Orchestra. Watch it.”

When both of the conductor’s arms moved powerfully, the Happy Birthday song came out. When the song ended, they started playing the 1st act of Jun Hyuk’s choral concerto.

After another hour passed, a pianist sat alone on stage to play the birthday song, and waved. Then, he began to play Jun Hyuk’s piano sonata.

“That’s Portugal. He was the only person performing at this time over there.”

When the piano sonata ended, Danny who is on his European tour appeared and congratulated Yoon Kwang Hun on his birthday.

“Happy Birthday Mr. Yoon!”

Colin’s band was much funnier because of Kyung Min Ho. They must have learned from Kyung Min Ho, because they bowed deeply to the camera and then yelled in Korean,

“Happy Birthday on turning 60, father.”

Yoon Kwang Hun was unable to hold back his laughter because of Colin and Todd’s sloppy Korean. And he realized what his true birthday present is.

“This was matched by parallax. We’re going to have you 24 performances by going around the world in 1 hour intervals. Everyone is playing my music. And before each performance, everyone is congratulating you on your birthday.”

“You still remembered?”

While the audition program was running in Korea, they had to hold a press conference because of the agency’s tricks. On the night they held the press conference, Yoon Kwang Hun got drunk and talked about his dream. Back then, it had seemed like an impossible dream.

‘Your music playing constantly as the world makes a turn. Your music coming out anywhere at anytime for 1 year, 365 days.’

“Yes. How could I forget that?”

Jun Hyuk laughed as he spoke.

“It’s not to 365 days, but my music won’t end for at least the 24 hours of your birthday today. This much doesn’t make your dream complete, but isn’t it achieving just about the tail end of it, father?”

Yoon Kwang Hun did not sleep and after 23 hours, he watched all of the performances including Rome’s.

He cannot miss his dream coming to life by sleeping.

Chapter 273

3 months later, all of Isaac Stern Center's smaller theaters opened and a lot of programs were held in the center.

Due to the center's program which did not consider genres, there was a strange mix of rock manias with tattoos on their arms and classical viewers in suits.

Everyone anticipated Jun Hyuk's performance each night, but there were only 1 or 2 performances in a month.

And only 6 months had shows. The other 6 months were nailed in off-season.

Amelia's tour only lasted 6 months out of a year as well. Jun Hyuk and Amelia traveled for 6 months and rested.

During off-season, the orchestra members formed string quartets, trios, and quintets to create new musical worlds or go on world tours.

Jun Hyuk's shows became incredible news.

His performance music was not just the elegant and beautiful symphonies he had released until now, but also sophisticated music that was even avant-garde.

All media outlets tried to write articles at the same time.

Jun Hyuk and his orchestra were Explorer. He threw the music that was for easy listening to other orchestras, and they only played the strange and complex music that endlessly explored music and sound.

It had been difficult to get tickets to Jun Hyuk's shows at first, but the empty seats started to increase. Only $\frac{2}{3}$ of the seats filled, and the people in that $\frac{2}{3}$ were always the same.

Juilliard, Eastman, Clayton Conservatory's lovers of music and professional musicians, orchestra conductors, critics, and music professors always took those seats.

Since he released a new piece after just 2 shows, they could only listen to the music in albums if they missed a single how.

There were orchestras that put on Jun Hyuk's experimental songs, but they always led to being scorned. Not just anyone can train a perfect orchestra.

There was no change to Jun Hyuk's life as though running on clockwork. He went back and forth from his house and the center, put his all into his music activity, released most of his new songs as scores, and did not play the music himself.

Jun Hyuk enjoyed listening to the albums that musicians created with his music. At times, he would discover brilliant talents for whom he would create songs for and produce albums with.

Endlessly complicated and experimental contemporary and classical, romantic, and inherited classical. And pop, rock, jazz, and blues, which the public goes crazy for. It was mysterious that all of this music came from the head and fingertips of a single person.

In the end, Rolling Stones magazine created Jun's Chart. They created a chart for albums and singles created with Jun Hyuk's original songs as the base.

The interesting part was that those ranking in the top of Jun's Chart usually ranked in the top of the Billboard chart.

People gave the one elevator in JS Center a name.

Elevator to Star!

People who get a call from Jun Hyuk to meet, take the elevator down to the studio, and become stars. When this phenomenon repeated, there were more and more rookie musicians who released albums and singles with Jun Hyuk's music.



Jun Hyuk's travels to find new sounds and music did not end.

If he got information of an instrument that he never heard before, he immediately got on his private plane to go see it.

He only came back after hearing it and on the occasion he discovered an instrument that he liked, he needed to have it even if he needed to pay a fortune for it.

New sound, new music. Jun Hyuk was wandering around in search of this.

“Tara, let’s go to India.”

“India?”

“Yeah. I found an instrument that’s believed to be in the family of sitars.”

The sitar was originally a Persian lute-style stringed instrument, but it went over to India to develop. It is representative to India with its unique and subtle tone, so it gives off the atmosphere of India just by playing it.

“The sitar’s shape is completely different. It isn’t round, and it looks like a hip. It’s showing that the sitar was formed after the female body.”

“It makes sound? If it’s the original form, isn’t it really old?”

“120 years. I heard the restoration work is done and they’re looking for strings based on old documents. I want to see it before it’s completely restored. We need to attach different strings to it and hear their sounds.”

Judging from Jun Hyuk’s excited voice, it looks like they cannot avoid getting on the plane to India. Tara put a few staff members and bodyguards on standby, and reserved a hotel under staff name.

They always went quietly when traveling like this.

The day that Jun Hyuk spoke, he went to Mumbai in India.



Jun Hyuk was locked in the procession of terrible traffic, and ignored the children pushing their faces up against the window of his limousine.

Though the children could not see the people sitting inside the car because of the tinted windows, they kept yelling help and begging.

He donated astronomical amounts of money until now, but it looked like the numbers of these kinds of kids did not go down.

All of the staff members sitting inside the car were holding their breaths because of Jun Hyuk's uncomfortable face.

When the sound of begging children came through the car windows, they started sounding like solos to duets, trios to choruses, and Jun Hyuk smiled bitterly.

It was a moment when he began to dislike his ability to hear even this tragic cry of young children as music.

Jun Hyuk's eyes suddenly opened wide.

'Did I hear wrong?'

Jun Hyuk's mind heard a solo sound come through among the loud chorus. No, it seemed like it was not his mind but his ears hearing the sound.

However, it was neither a mistake nor a sound he heard in his head.

The solo sound coming weakly through the thick window is clearly a girl's voice.

Jun Hyuk quickly rolled the window down and within moments, a few children's hands came inside the car. And the sound, 'help,' came flooding into the car all at once.

"Jun, what are you doing?"

Tara gave the staff a look to roll the window back up, but Jun Hyuk put up his hand to restrain them.

"Leave it. Don't roll it up."

Jun Hyuk started to become nervous with his fingers interlocked, stuck in a traffic jam. Why can't he hear it? Was it really a mistake?

Then when the car began to move little by little, Jun Hyuk quickly shouted,

"Stop. Don't move."

When Jun Hyuk's limousine stopped moving, cars began to honk behind them but Jun Hyuk did not budge an inch.

Even a single moment is good. Whether he heard it in his head or with his ears, he wants to hear it once again.

Jun Hyuk suddenly opened the car door and got out. The doors to a van right behind opened and 6 sturdy men came out to surround him.

"What is it? Maestro, are you okay?"

The bodyguards first checked on Jun Hyuk's state and then blocked the children swarming toward him.

"I'm okay. Don't push the children too much."

He is sure. The sound is not something he made up in his head, but a sound he heard outside.

At that moment, he heard another weak sound 'help' among the kids begging.

Jun Hyuk pushed through the children and chased that sound.

Unlike the children group of children swarmed together, there was a small girl a footstep away with her back turned.

That young girl wore a t-shirt and skirt more ragged than the clothes of the other children, as she looked far away and yelled 'help'.

"Jun, let's just go. It's dangerous here."

Tara rushed out to look around Jun Hyuk and rushed to speak, but Jun Hyuk did not move.

"Did you hear that voice just now? It's that kid's voice."

The girl must have heard the buzz behind her because she turned her body in the direction of the noise and put out her hand.

When Jun Hyuk saw her, he was so surprised he stumbled and his bodyguards needed

to support him.

Her skin was scarred from a severe burn. She is blind.

Jun Hyuk steadied himself and spoke to the translator standing next to Tara,

“The song that this girl sang just now... No, tell her to say ‘help’ just as she did before. Tell her I’ll give her money, too.”

Before the translator could finish speaking, the little girl said ‘help’. It was not just the sound of her saying a word. It was a strange sound as if a sound is on top of an odd tone.

Jun Hyuk felt a thrill as though electricity ran through his whole body.

“There’s a child in the world with a voice like this... It wasn’t a mistake.”

When Jun Hyuk put out his hand to touch the child’s head, the translator quickly yelled,

“Stop!”

Jun Hyuk stopped and the translator quickly spoke,

“Look carefully. She’s blind. That was done on purpose to get pity from foreigners when she begs. Look at those kids begging over there. Aren’t several of them disabled?”

There were children without a hand or a leg standing a step away from them because of the bodyguards.

“What? Then are you saying that they did this to these kids on purpose?”

Everyone became speechless because of the translator’s shocking words. Crippling children just to have them beg? He was so furious his whole body began to tremble.

“That’s right. They’re all children of the lowest class. They’re sold off for nothing to be crippled like this and then sent out to beg. Then when little girls are old enough, they are sent out as prostitutes. There will be dangerous people behind her. And you’ll suffer if you touch someone of the lowest class.”

Chapter 274

People of the lowest class who are called the dalit or hari kap in Hindi.

People who are so low that they are outside the Indian caste system. This means that they are treated like beasts or livestock, no, even less than that since people are not believed to be unclean just because they touched animals. These people are banished as though they have a contagious disease.

These dalits are usually a group of workers who take on the work despised by Indian society like corpse treatment, leather repair, street cleaning, and toilet waste disposal. They face contempt, prejudice, and religious, cultural, and social discrimination in their lives of poverty.

In the past, they regularly had their eyes taken out just for looking at sacred scriptures, their tongues cut off for talking about the scriptures, and any body parts that touched the scriptures cut off.

Though a lot of these inhuman discrimination and acts have disappeared in modern times, there are still remnants of unimaginable discrimination.

There is a child who lost his vision when his teacher beat him just for drinking water at school, and they are not even able to receive the lunch rationed out by the state.

These children have lunch by eating the other children's leftovers even though they are students of the same school.

Dalits need to take on manure treatment, but they cannot use machine but must use their bare hands. They also need to clean out manholes, but a lot of people die due to toxic gas.

These are not old stories, but stories of today in the 21st century.

The interpreter did not allow Jun Hyuk to touch the little girl because of her social rank. And before the interpreter could finish speaking, dozens of rough men were already coming toward Jun Hyuk's group. There were so many of them that the bodyguards looked tense.

The scumbags looked at the interpreter and spoke roughly.

“They say that we should leave if we’re not going to give the children money.”

The terrified interpreter was barely to speak.

“Tell them we’ll meet with this child’s parents.”

Jun Hyuk spoke with his teeth clenched. If he could, he wanted to kill all of these people on the spot.

“What? Parents? Didn’t you hear what I just said? The parents already sold them.”

“Don’t talk nonsense and hurry up and tell them!”

Before the interpreter could relay Jun Hyuk’s entire message, the men burst out in laughter.

“They say they’ll sell this girl if you like her. They’re asking for \$10,000.”

“What? \$10,000? These fucking assholes!”

The interpreter was able to understand up to the word ‘dollar,’ but unable to understand the rest. The interpreter does not know Korean.

Jun Hyuk breathed roughly, thought of people who would be able to kill these guys for him, and yelled to Tara.

“Tara. Call the White House. I need to talk to the President.”

“Jun, don’t do this. Don’t make this bigger...”

Before Tara could finish speaking, Jun Hyuk shouted,

“Shut up and do as I say! Who else can help me right now?”

Tara took out her phone with an anxious expression. She became even more nervous when she thought of the time difference. It must be the middle of the night in Washington.

“Oh, Maestro. Why are you calling me all of a sudden? I was actually trying to decide whether I should call you or not. I mastered the songs up to the 5th one. Ha ha.”

The President spoke over the phone in a pleased voice.

“Mr. President. I am calling about an urgent matter. I ask you to forgive the rudeness.”

Jun Hyuk pushed down his anger and spoke in a well-mannered tone first.

“No, it’s nothing. A call from you would always be welcome, even if we were in the middle of war. Ha ha.”

“I have a personal favor to ask of you, would it be alright?”

The President stopped laughed and became silent before speaking calmly.

“First, tell me what it is. I’ll decide if it’s alright or not after that.”

Jun Hyuk gave a brief account of his current situation. That bastards who cut off young children’s hands and feet are bustling here.

“I see. Then what is the favor?”

“I don’t care whether it is the Indian Prime Minister or the head of the police, just anyone who can catch these bastards in front of me.”

“Well... Is that all? I was nervous thinking you were going to ask me to launch a nuclear missile or something. Ha ha.”

Even as Jun Hyuk heard the President laughing, he felt nervous. But he heard the President’s refreshing response right away.

“I’ve got it. I’ll do that personal favor for you. It seems like this is urgent, so I’ll take action right away.”

“Thank you, Mr. President.”

He heard another voice before Jun Hyuk could even finish his greeting. It seems the President was connected over speakerphone. And the voice he hears now is not the President’s. It must be a staff member.

“Maestro, will you tell me your current location?”

Jun Hyuk told him what the compass on his phone said.

“Don’t move and stay in that spot, please.”

When the call ended, the interpreter had become pale and was looking at Jun Hyuk. Goodness, to mobilize the American President.

Jun Hyuk looked at the interpreter and spoke coldly.

“You can go too. I don’t even want to look at you. What? I’ll suffer if I touch the child? Your face is dirtier and uglier!”

As soon as Jun Hyuk spoke, a bodyguard dragged the interpreter away. That bodyguard’s face was distorted in anger as well.

After Jun Hyuk’s bodyguards and the rough men held off in confrontation for about 10 minutes, a loud helicopter and siren sounds rang with the arrival of dozens of motorcycles.

They used the fastest method of transportation because of the terrible traffic jam. A special task force in the helicopter landed on the ground and the police on the motorcycles ran over.

They aimed their rifles and blockaded the surrounding area, with a middle-aged man in a suit running over. He saw Jun Hyuk standing in the middle of his suited bodyguards, and took his hat off.

“Maestro Jun?”

“Yes.”

“Are you hurt anywhere? I’m from the Mumbai office. I’m Commander Farhan Akhtar. I received an urgent call that you are in danger.”

Commander Akhtar introduced himself in fluent English as he looked over Jun Hyuk’s body.

“First, please take care of those guys.”

Jun Hyuk gestured to the swarm of rough men. Their faces were severely distorted.

“Leave it to us. But beyond that, it’d be best for you to leave this place. We’ll escort you to your hotel. But this child?”

The little girl was frightened by the sound of the helicopter and sirens, and held tightly to Jun Hyuk’s pants.

“I’d like to protect her for a while. I’ll tell you in detail later. And Commander, are you also averse to this child because of her social standing?”

Jun Hyuk tested the Commander who was trying to help him. He became strangely sensitive while looking at the poor child.

“Hm. You’re saying she’s a dalit? I’m embarrassed that you saw the bad habits left over in our culture.”

Jun Hyuk’s face flushed red with the Commander’s courteous words.

“Oh, no. I was harsh, forgive me.”

“Maestro. Let’s talk about stuff like that slowly, and let’s start moving first. With this little girl.”

The Commander took the little girl’s hand and showed effort to calm her down.

Jun Hyuk’s group arrived at their hotel with a police escort.

“Maestro, relax here. I’ll take care of what happened today and call you.”

“Yes, thank you. I’ll be waiting for your call.”

The Commander saluted Jun Hyuk and quickly went back.



Tara took fast measures to find a hotelier who could speak in English perfectly, and she and a maid took the little girl shivering in fear into the bathroom.

The girl sat in the bathtub full of warm water and when she heard the language she

was familiar with and the hotel maid's touch, her fear began to subside little by little. Before they knew it, there was even the sound of giggling and playing with the water.

There was no way to know whether it is because she is a child or because it is her nature, but she quickly started adjusting to the sudden change in environment. She seemed to be rather enjoying it.

The girl bathed, changed into new clothes, and started to eat the food that the maid brought her, completely leaving her fear behind her and filling her empty stomach. Her face lit up with joy.

Jun Hyuk watched her bright face with satisfaction, and picked up the receiver.

"Mr. President. Thank you for listening to my strange favor. It was figured out well thanks to you."

"Maestro, can you tell me exactly what's going on? I asked the Indian office to help you because you were in danger... but it seems that wasn't the actual situation."

Jun Hyuk smiled brightly and told the President what he just did.

"You basically rescued me. I discovered a little girl who is like me, or maybe even rarer to find than I am. We're together right now."

"What? Someone similar to you, Maestro? You don't mean... How could that be?"

Chapter 275

A girl who is like Jun Hyuk. The President found it hard to believe. Isn't he someone who might or might not appear once every 100 years – no – someone who is called the greatest genius in the history of music?

But another person to appear in one generation? Are geniuses this common?

"Until now, I thought that the human voice is incomplete. Even the greatest singer sounded unstable to me and the sound wasn't that impressive, and that thought hasn't changed yet. But this little girl next to me is a perfect instrument with a perfect voice."

The President could not give any response to Jun Hyuk who was speaking excitedly. This is because he could not understand the difference between an incomplete human voice and complete voice.

"I don't know anything beyond her voice... but this girl will turn the world over with just her voice."

It was hard to believe, but Maestro Jun is sure. He is not someone to talk nonsense.

"Mr. President. Thank you for doing me this strange favor. I don't know how to repay you."

"Then you're saying that I listened to your strange favor and helped rescue a girl with the voice of a century, no, a perfect voice?"

Jun Hyuk thought he should have bit his tongue when he heard the President's voice full of jest. This man is not one to miss out on a perfect opportunity. The President is a politician who takes advantage of opportunities well.

"Well. I'm not trying to brag, but what I asked you for a few times... What do you think about that? Oh, I'm not saying this expecting payment for my help. It's a request I gave you whenever I had the chance to. Ha ha."

Jun Hyuk laughed out loud at the President's simple request.

“What? Oh, ha ha. I got it. Prepare a seat for me at the White House year-end dinner on Christmas Eve this year. I’ll be sure to attend. And of course I’ll play a piano duet with you.”

“Thank you, Maestro. Tell me if something like this comes up again. I can’t do anything with nuclear missiles, but I would be able to end the Delta force. Ha ha.”

When Jun Hyuk ended the call and looked at the little girl, she was still chewing on food and filling her stomach.

Jun Hyuk sat at a piano in the room.

When he started playing the piano without looking away from the young girl, a strange melody flowed out. Tara and the staff members are not used to it as Westerners, but the Indian maids looking after the young girl shouted out at the same time,

Saabun!

Jun Hyuk was playing a melody unique to India.

Western music, especially classical, uses a composition system of 12 majors and 12 minors. Each group centers around its own keynote, and a series of notes form a group called a scale.

One keynote uses a melody or harmony as a center and other notes have a dependent relationship on that note in a group of sounds, and forming those kinds of group sounds is what composition is.

No matter how grand and complicated classical music looks, in the end it cannot get away from the 12 majors and 12 minors, or the composition system of 24.

The composition of traditional Indian music however, exceeds 2,000 and there are hundreds of compositions that are used often. And most of these compositions are named after ancient Indian gods.

From the view of Indian music, Western classical music is just music that is too simple and boring.

The hotel maid shouted out Saabun because Jun Hyuk is playing the Saabun scale.

The little girl was eating cake when the movement of her mouth slowed down and she began to focus on the piano melody.

Jun Hyuk saw this and started to change the melody. He played various Indian compositions in alternation, and classical melodies flowed out as well.

The melody grew increasingly discordant and the piano song became more and more complex.

The little girl swallowed the cake in her mouth and was slowly led to Jun Hyuk by the piano sound, touching the table with both hands, and started focusing on his song. She moved her fingers and moved her hand, eventually moving both arms, waving lightly to the rhythm.

Jun Hyuk's piano stopped after going for more than 30 minutes. When Jun Hyuk stopped suddenly, the excited girl spoke rapidly in Hindi.

“She is asking you to keep going. She said that she doesn't need to eat something sweet – she must be talking about the cake – so she would like for you to keep playing.”

The hotelier looking after the girl also spoke excitedly. They are hearing the maestro's piano for themselves, which is known to be an extremely rare occurrence. This kind of luck does not come everyday.

“Relay my message exactly. Tell her to sing just as I played the piano. Then she'll be able to experience another kind of music.”

He is sure that she will have memorized the piano melody that he played for over 30 minutes.

The hotelier relayed the message slowly and exactly with an expression of disbelief, and the girl opened her mouth as if she had been waiting.

The girl started to make a thin sound, and that sound was exactly the melody that came from the piano. The more interesting aspect is that she recreated the perfect harmony of the left hand's accompaniment and the right hand's main melody.

Tara was watching this when her legs went weak and she plopped down. She loves music more than anyone else does, and she has lived listening to incredible music from Jun Hyuk's side. She must know the value of the sound coming out of the girl's mouth.

She could only think of one thing:

Voice of an Angel

Tara realized that Jun Hyuk's behavior until now had been because of this unbelievable voice. The ability to remember the music precisely on top of that. This has not been discovered in anyone other than Jun Hyuk.

Tara looked at Jun Hyuk. Jun Hyuk looked so blissful it seemed he could not feel more joy as he watched the girl and then put his hands on the piano again.

Their music continued for another hour and everyone in the room felt so much like they were dreaming as they listened to the sweet music that they did not even realize that time was passing by.

Someone was standing outside Jun Hyuk's door with an ecstatic expression as well. It was Commander Akhtar who had helped Jun Hyuk.

The melody of India, the motherland he loves. The beautiful voice that is bringing out that melody.

The Commander realized that the voice's owner is the blind girl. And he also understood why that famous maestro had made such a big deal.

When he could no longer hear the music, he came to his senses and knocked on the door.

"Oh Commander, come in. Thank you again for helping us."

Jun Hyuk discovered Commander Akhtar, bolted up from the piano, and shook his hand.

"It's nothing, Maestro. I'll tell you what happened first. Those brutish men were all arrested. And we sent the poor children to facilities for now."

But the Commander's face was not bright. Another gang and different children will fill that emptied space. It is the endless repeat of this shady society.

"Did you hear this child's story?"

“According to our investigation, this child’s name is Jina. We estimate that she’s around 10 years old. There was a landslide in the village she lived in 3 years ago, so half of the people died and the other half scattered... They said that Jina’s parents probably died since they say that they brought her when they found her wandering around by herself.

Jun Hyuk clenched his teeth to hold back his tears. Commander Akhtar saw Jun Hyuk suddenly flush red, and flinched. He should have spoken with more care...

He recalled an article that said he used to wander the streets 15 years ago though he is a great master of music now. To this great maestro, his past self and this blind girl will overlap.

Commander Akhtar was at a loss for words and looked elsewhere.

“Commander, I’d like to take this girl to America right away. Would that be possible? I’ll even adopt her if necessary.”

Everyone except Jina’s jaws dropped. Tara in particular, had no idea of how to handle this incredible statement.

“When this child becomes an adult – no – before that, she will become a singer who shakes up the world. An incredible soprano... No, she’ll become a singer who is limitless and can’t be classified.”

“Yes, it seems that there’s plenty potential for that. I heard this girl’s voice from the door as well.”

Commander Akhtar spoke quietly as he smiled. He does not know music well, but the girl has a tremendous voice that makes ears ring. A world-renowned genius maestro who says that he will adopt her.

It would be weird to say that she cannot become a limitless singer.

“Maestro. I’ll try to work on it so you can take legal action. Will you wait until I call you again?”

“Of course. I’ll wait for good results.”

“Don’t worry about it. The world’s ‘Jun’ is saying that he wants to adopt. I’m sure you’ll

be able to skip over the minor procedural steps.”

Commander Akhtar left the hotel with thoughts of skipping those minor steps.

Chapter 276

No one could speak. Jina became nervous because of the sudden silence and turned her head from side to side, hoping for someone to speak.

“Tara.”

“Yeah.”

“I live in the U.S., but I’m Korean. Will you tell the foundation legal team to act on this so I can adopt this child?”

“Sure. There won’t be any issues since this girl... Jina doesn’t have parents either. I’ll take care of it right away.”

“Thanks. Oh right, Tara. I’m sorry for yelling at you earlier. Truly.”

Tara winked and smiled with the phone to her ear.

Jun Hyuk sat in front of Jin and spoke calmly and affectionately.

“I’m going to teach you. You have the voice of an angel, no, of heaven. I’ll create heavenly music for you, so you sing. People will think of the songs you sing as heavenly music. What do you think? Incredible, right?”

When the hotelier hesitated because she was not sure whether Jun Hyuk was talking to himself or not, Jun Hyuk kept talking.

“You hear the dry land barking that it’s thirsty, right?”

With a glance from Jun Hyuk, the hotelier quickly started speaking in Hindi.

“And the sound of flies flying around in the bathroom is beautiful? You want to express the passion coming from the hot sun? With your voice, I mean.”

Jina nodded her head vigorously. And she started to chat away again.

“She says that there are no songs. She wants to sing about the sound of the land crying, flies batting their wings, and the hot sun, but she says that there are no songs.”

“I’ll gift those songs to you. I’ll make whatever you want to express, so sing as much as you want. What do you think?”

Jina nodded her head again and smiled brightly.

“Then do you want to live with me? I’ll make songs for you like I just did, let you eat lots of delicious things, and make it so you can sleep in a cozy bed, so come with me.”

When Jina got the translation of what Jun Hyuk was saying, she got surprised and shook her head.

“She says that she can’t. She’s saying that she can’t leave without the permission of her owners, the men from before.”

Then, one of the maids held Jina and started speaking rapidly.

When the maid was done talking, Jina got on the floor with the maid’s help, bowed over to kiss his feet and would not get up.

“Excuse me. What on earth did you say to her?”

Jun Hyuk was surprised by Jina’s sudden actions. When he yelled toward the maid, she bowed to ask him for understanding and spoke,

“Sir. This girl doesn’t know complicated things like that. She only knows that she’s a slave and that she has an owner. I told her that her owner has changed. I understand your intention to protect her, so just say that you are her owner for now. That is how she’ll follow you. You can help her understand that she’s not a slave once you get to America.”

Jun Hyuk felt embarrassed that he had thought he and Jina overlapped even for a moment. He was an orphan, but this girl is a slave. The weight of their pain will have been completely different.

Jun Hyuk stood Jina up, knelt in front of her, and slowly embraced her.

“You’ll come to realize on your own that you’re not a slave. I’ll make it so that happens

soon.”



The Commander had left as though he would be able to handle everything quickly, and came back after only one day.

“That child Jina was someone that didn’t exist.”

“What? What does that mean?”

“First off, Jina’s parents didn’t have birth registration. Of course that was the same for Jina. That’s why it took some time.”

Commander Akhtar handed a manila folder over.

“But we quickly created documents. Her name is Jina, her age is 10. We made her birthday yesterday when she met you, Maestro. Will you be going back to America today?”

“We’ll have to. I’d like to take her back as soon as we can and see her ability.”

“Then I’ll bring over someone from the adoption agency. Jina will become that person’s companion. She will become your daughter completely once everything is settled in America.”

“Thank you, Commander. I won’t forget all you’ve done for us.”

“It’s nothing. What I’ve done for you? It’s overwhelming for me to even think of Jina becoming a world-renowned singer through you. And I’m happy with just the fact that I was able to help.”

Jun Hyuk handed a small envelope over to the Commander who looked pleased.

“What is this?”

“The kids you talked about yesterday. The ones you said were sent to a facility first.....”

“Yes.”

“Please use this for those children. And JS Foundation will continue to provide sponsorship.”

Commander Akhtar dropped the envelope when he saw that the check inside was written for \$5 million, and sat blankly for a while.

He had heard rumors that Jun Hyuk would have made enough money to buy entire countries if he didn’t donate so much. The Commander thought that those rumors could be true.

Commander Akhtar put the envelope away and bowed his head.

“Thank you. I’ll do my best so those children can live like people.”

That was not the end however. Jun Hyuk’s continuing gift was more surprising than the amount that he was donating.

“We’ll invite you for the first day that Jina stands on stage. Come see for yourself how the girl you rescued yourself grows up.”



Yoon Kwang Hun looked at Jun Hyuk and the little Indian girl he brought, and just blinked.

“Father, didn’t I always say that the human voice is an incomplete instrument? But this child is the only exception.”

“So... so you’re saying that this child has a perfect voice?”

“Yes. It’s beyond perfect. It’s better than any instrument created by humanity. She can create various tones and changes emotions within moments. The range she can cover is beyond imagination.”

A child who is just 10 years old? It was unbelievable, but Jun Hyuk is speaking with confidence. He cannot not believe this.

“And her ability to remember notes is the same as mine. She memorized a piano song that I played for around 30 minutes perfectly.”

Yoon Kwang Hun remembered his first meeting with Jun Hyuk when he said that he memorized Marlowe's symphony in its entirety. If Jun Hyuk felt even a little of what he felt back then, it is inevitable that he would be so excited.

"When will I be able to hear this child's voice?"

"Listen for yourself once Jina gets a bit more stable. You're really going to be surprised."

"So you're saying you'll adopt this child?"

"Yes."

"Alright, then do that."

Yoon Kwang Hun did not say much else. Jun Hyuk did not bring it up to get permission either. It would be laughable for him to say something about a decision that an adult over 30 made.

"What can I do?"

"First, get us a teacher who can teach Jina English. And make a school for her too."

"What? A school?"

"Yes, a school for Jina to attend. A school for children who can't see like Jina. Young kids need to grow up among their peers in order to avoid becoming wicked like me. We need to make it so she has a normal childhood."

Yoon Kwang Hun frowned.

"I'm against it."

"What?"

"You said it needs to be normal. Is it normal to make a school for Jina? Wouldn't it be normal to just enroll her in a special school in New York? It's already abnormal for you to think about making a school for her and bringing friends to her. Shouldn't you become a normal parent too?"

Jun Hyuk imagined himself dropping Jina off at school every morning and attending parent teacher conferences. Like a normal parent. It wasn't a bad picture.

"Alright. Then look into a school."

"Fine. Until now is an issue of our family... What's going to happen to Maestro Jun?"

He is reading the situation clearly. There was an aftertaste left in Jun Hyuk's words and he laughed when Yoon Kwang Hun noticed this.

"Well it's as you already guessed. I'm only going to focus on teaching Jina for at least 5 years from now on."

"Alright. Do as you want."

He is declaring that he will halt all activities for 5 years. Yoon Kwang Hun did not say much about this decision either. Since it is something that he has already decided, he needs to settle the matters after.

"First, we'll have to look around for a conductor to take over JS Orchestra. Is there someone you have in mind?"

"Yes. I was thinking of Berlin's Serill Petrenko. If he doesn't want to do it, the Board of Directors can decide."

"Petrenko?"

"Yes. He's the first conductor to put Inferno on stage. Whether he used a shortcut or not, it's true that he's the person who delved deepest into my music."

"Okay. I'll be sure to bring him."

"And....."

"What? Is there something else?"

Jun Hyuk scratched his head and spoke up cautiously.

"I haven't been able to tell Amelia about this yet. She's coming back next month... Be there when I tell her."

“Ke ke. Are you scared?”

“Yes. If I say I want to adopt when we haven’t even gotten married, she might kick me out.”

Yoon Kwang Hun could not stop laughing for a while. Jun Hyuk watched this and frowned.

“Are you having fun?”

“Oh, it’s not because of that. It’ because of her name.”

“What? Name?”

“Yeah. When you adopt her, her name is ‘Jina Jang’. That’s okay, but it’s ‘Jang Jina’ in Korean. Isn’t the nuance a little strange? He he.”

Yoon Kwang Hun did not stop laughing, ignoring Jun Hyuk’s burning up.

There was another reason why he could not stop laughing. He and Jun Hyuk do not have a drop of the same blood, but he is walking in the same path.

The fate of taking in a child off the street with no relation to himself. Will Jina take the same path when she grows up?

However, he stopped laughing when he remembered something he had been forgetting.

“Oh. I’m becoming a grandfather all of a sudden.”

Yoon Kwang Hun had become a complete old man.

Chapter 277

For 1 month, Jina only ate and slept. They could tell how starved and tired she had been.

After 1 month, her skinny cheeks and hands became fleshed out.

She was taken back and forth to the hospital to check on her health, and they heard something to despair of.

“Maestro. Jina will never be able to see.”

“Nothing like a cornea or eye implant will work?”

“It’s completely damaged. It’s the same as if arms and legs were cut off. Just as arms and legs cannot be attached even with donors, it is difficult even if she has an eye donor.”

The doctor was also regretful and his voice was weak as he explained Jina’s state.

“And about Jina’s age. What age do you think she is?”

“I heard she is 10.”

“I don’t think so. By the state of her teeth, she seems to be at least 13 years old. Fortunately, it’s not too late.”

“What? What do you mean too late?”

“If she eats and rests plenty at least now, she will be able to recover a normal physique. She can’t just stay inside the house too much just because she cannot see. She needs to run around like other children and build up her stamina.”

“I understand.”

Jun Hyuk’s decision to make sure that she would never experience unhappiness even if she will never be able to see again.

And after Jina had been living with Jun Hyuk for 1 month, the feared day came to them.

Amelia finished her tour and came home with a stony expression. She already knew through the media that Jun Hyuk had brought a girl home from India.

“Adopt?”

“Yeah.”

Amelia sighed lightly and Jun Hyuk was just watching for her reaction.

“What if I say no?”

“Then... then I guess I’ll have to be her custodian.”

“Even if you’re her custodian, doesn’t that mean she’ll live here with us?”

“Ye... yeah.”

“Then it’s just a difference in the term. How is that different from adopting her?”

“Is... is that right?”

Jun Hyuk wasn’t even able to lift his head and was only resenting Yoon Kwang Hun. He had not come even though he knows that Amelia was returning today.

“Alright. Then that child, what was her name?”

“Jina.”

“Yeah. Jina will call you dad and what about me? She’ll call me mom anyway. No?”

Amelia’s voice grew increasingly sharp.

“Goodness. I’m still a Miss who hasn’t gotten married. But mom!”

“Then... then you can marry me.”

As soon as Jun Hyuk spoke, sparks flew from Amelia’s eyes.

“You... you asshole! Get out of this room, no, this house you jerk!”

Amelia’s eyes were already full of tears than anger.



“Oy, you idiot. How does it make sense to propose so you can adopt a kid? You think of that as a proposal?”

“It’s not just that. I think of Amelia as the only girl in my life.”

Tara came to comfort Amelia who had been crying all night, and Jun Hyuk who had gotten kicked out just drank with Yoon Kwang Hun.

When Yoon Kwang Hun found out about Jun Hyuk’s mistake, he wanted to give him a smack. How women take children men bring home from outside is common knowledge found in soap operas.

“Then what of it? You already told her you guys should get married to make a mom for the kid. Did you think she’d like it if you proposed like that?”

“I’m going to go crazy. Really.....”

It really was not because of Jina. Marriage is a scary thing to him but if he does do it, he thinks that the only person he would marry is Amelia. He could not imagine another woman.

“This is a really serious situation. You guys could break up now because of this.”

“Father!”

“Why is this jerk yelling? You did it to yourself!”

Yoon Kwang Hun only said things that would annoy him as though enjoying the situation. He did not worry because he knows what kind of person Amelia is.

“Hey, think about it. With those looks and the fame of a world-renowned pianist. How many guys do you think follow her around because they like her? But she only looks at you. She endured it even if you didn’t propose to her. But you bring a little girl from

India and..."

Jun Hyuk yelled at Yoon Kwang Hun's unnecessary words.

"Ugh! Stop and lay out a solution."

"What do I know? I lived alone all my life. And I'm taken aback too. I have a granddaughter all of a sudden. I'm becoming a grandfather all of a sudden... How will Amelia feel when I'm like this?"

This wasn't it. He thought that he would be able to persuade her but spitting out a proposal at this appropriate timing because of his dumb mouth was the biggest mistake.

Jun Hyuk drank his beer.

"Amelia probably would have fully accepted adopting the kid. She's open-minded. But she exploded when you asked to marry because of the child."

Yoon Kwang Hun emptied his beer bottle and told Jun Hyuk the only way he knew.

"Wouldn't it be best to show her your sincerity?"

"Sincerity?"

"Yeah. Amelia is the only woman in Jang Jun Hyuk's life. There's only you in the past, now, and in the future."

Jun Hyuk imagined buying a diamond ring and getting down on one knee to propose. It is a method with a 100% success rate in the movies.

"Don't even think about a diamond ring the size of a baseball. You'll get beaten with that."

Sincerity.

Jun Hyuk just drank while thinking of a way to express his sincere feelings.

The next morning, Jun Hyuk pushed a piece of paper under Amelia's door and spoke as he knocked,

“Amelia. Make sure you look at that. I’ll wait in front of the door.”

After he had been waiting at the door for about 20 minutes, the door opened.

Tears were running down Amelia’s cheeks.

Her hand trembled as she held the paper Jun Hyuk had given her. She looked at Jun Hyuk and suddenly wrapped her arms around his neck.

“Will you marry me?”

When Jun Hyuk whispered into Amelia’s ear, she hugged him even harder.

“Yes!”



When Jun Hyuk proudly talked about his successful proposal, Yoon Kwang Hun let out a low whistle in surprise.

“You’re better than I thought. How did you figure it out?”

“You told me to show her my sincerity. So I showed her.”

Yoon Kwang Hun’s eyes grew wide. He had just said that because he had nothing else to say, but it worked?

“You just told her? Your sincerity? She believes that? Amelia’s dumber than I thought. She believe’s a man’s words.”

How great would it be if people could show their sincerity with just words? Words can hold truth and lies, so it is difficult to tell what the truth is.

This is especially true when people are angry.

“Even I know that words aren’t enough. Fortunately, I had a document that would let me show my sincerity. In Korea. He he.”

“Korea? Document?”

“Yes. I showed her my will.”

“What? Will? You already made something like that?”

He hadn’t even dreamed of something like that even though he is now 60, but Jun Hyuk already wrote one? Yoon Kwang Hun looked at Jun Hyuk in disbelief and laughed.

“Almost 10 years ago? You don’t remember when strange people appeared saying that they’re my biological parents?”

“Oh, when you had your concert in Seoul.”

“Yes. Lawyer Baek Seung Ho created a will then to put out any fires. He said that no one would try to go after money that already has an owner.”

Yoon Kwang Hun could guess why they had written the will without saying a word to him about it. His name will be in that will.

“Amelia was the heiress in that will?”

“Yes. Just two people, you and Amelia.”

Yoon Kwang Hun hit his knee.

“It’s perfect. You were the only woman from 10 years ago. There’s nothing more sincere.”

Jun Hyuk did not know that he would use his will like this. Yoon Kwang Hun couldn’t not say something.

“But why is my name there? You thought you’d die before I did?”

“Just in case. I was young then... he he. I thought geniuses die quickly.”

Jun Hyuk flushed in embarrassment. Yoon Kwang Hun saw this and started laughing again.

“You don’t smoke, you only drink sometimes, and you go jogging every morning, but die quickly? You’re going to live longer than Jina.”

Not all geniuses die premature deaths. Einstein lived 76 years. Living like Jun Hyuk, he will live for more than 80 years.

Chapter 278

Jina slowly accepted and adjusted to her daily life which had become completely different. She no longer had to starve, could eat until she was full, and had a cozy place to sleep.

Not only was there no longer the smell of dirt bad enough to make her throw up, a pleasant smell came from her clothes and bedding. Jina evaluated everything by sound since she cannot see, and felt warmth in the voices of the people surrounding her.

She still thought of Jun Hyuk as her owner. She just thought of him as a kind and warm owner unlike the one she had before.

She thought of him as an owner who enjoys her singing instead of her begging, so she was happy about the fact that she just needed to sing for her owner.

And she was happy that everyone including her owner listened to her singing and enjoyed it.

The middle-aged woman who taught her English was ecstatic that she had come across the greatest blessing of her life.

It provided her with an incredible salary and the chance to meet a legendary maestro every day. And she is the only person who can listen to a child with the voice of an angel and Jun Hyuk's music performances.

– Alright, again. The part where you did ah-ah! was a little high. Lower it a little.

– You need to make it a little longer than that. About 0.5 seconds? Yeah. That's it.

Jina was living in the same way Jun Hyuk did when he first met Yoon Kwang Hun. She spent all day buried in music, listening to all genres from classical to pop and falling in love with new music.

And the first song she is learning from Jun Hyuk is "A, E, I, O, U". As the song does not have a language like English or Italian, it seemed like a song created just for Jina.

“Jun Hyuk. What do you think about teaching Jina vocalization first? Isn’t that song a little hard?”

“No. She doesn’t need basics like that. Jina’s a child who absorbs while singing. You can’t compare her to ordinary singers who were born with great voices.”

A world that normal, ordinary people cannot understand. Absorbing at once and learning on their own, it is a completely different world that they cannot explain.

Yoon Kwang Hun was able to gauge the size of Jina’s ability by comparing it to Jun Hyuk’s past.

Yoon Kwang Hun could not understand and just shook his head as he spoke to Amelia,

“Just watch. And enjoy the wonderful world that people like Jun can show you.”



Jun Hyuk and Amelia held their wedding at President Stern’s villa in Switzerland. It was a secret wedding that only family members attended.

Jun Hyuk’s best men were Colin and Danny, and the people Jun Hyuk met most nervously weren’t Amelia’s parents but her 7 older brothers.

“Oh! Maestro. No, it is brother now? Ha ha.”

The 7 men were neither scary nor threatening. They are just cavalier cowboys who raise nearly 1,000 cows.

There were other truly intimidating people. Amelia’s nieces and nephews. There were nearly 30 of them ranging from those in their teens to infants, and the sound of them chatting away made Jun Hyuk crazy.

No matter how hard he tried to change it into music, it was just impossible noise.

Jun Hyuk and Amelia exchanged rings, were wed by a priest, and had a deep kiss.

And the child everyone looked at with great curiosity held their hands and appeared on the aisle.

As Jun Hyuk and Amelia wed, they became parents.

“Alright, Jina. Today’s your first performance. There are a lot of people in front of you right now who will listen to your song and cry of happiness. Sing to your heart’s desire.”

Jina sang “A, E, I, O, U” for about 30 minutes and Jun Hyuk clenched both fists with his entire body trembling.

The music he had expected from Laura Goldberg. 13 year old Jina had completed that music to 100%.



“Jina, listen well.”

Jun Hyuk started to play the piano and not long after, Jina’s hands started to move. Her hands hesitated at times as it moved to the piano melody, but her hand did not stop moving naturally like water flowing.

Jun Hyuk finished playing after more than an hour and turned around, asking Jina,

“What do you think? Do you like it?”

“Yes. But a few parts are a little weird.”

Jun Hyuk’s smile grew wider.

“Really? How many parts are weird?”

“4 places.”

Jina vocalized the parts that she had found strange with her beautiful voice.

“Yeah. It’s a little weird, right? Then how should I change it?”

“Dad! You did it on purpose again? Just play it. I can’t compose and arrange.”

Jina was wearing dark purple glasses and pouted, while Jun Hyuk sighed.

Jina became a completely different person over the past 2 years. Her familiarity with English and bright expression. She has become a girl in her teens, grumbling to her parents.

She completely understood that Jun Hyuk and Amelia are her adoptive parents and not her owners, and she also realized that her adoptive parents are world-renowned musicians. She was also growing used to the attention she received because of this.

The school she began attending not too long ago was a different world. She felt the joy of learning and learned what having friends means.

Music was the only time she had to learn alone. She could not participate in music classes according to Jun Hyuk's request. The school's principal thought of this as a reasonable request. What could the school say when he is saying that he would like to teach her music himself?

What Jina considers the greatest blessing is her father who lets her listen to new music everyday. To her, Jun Hyuk is a magician.

He makes everything she hears, feels, thinks, and learns into music.

But if Jina could see, she would have been surprised by how the magician changed over 2 years.

Jun Hyuk did not come out of his studio at home. He came out a bit when Amelia was home, but there were more and more days when he spent nights in his studio.

There were no scores either. Unintelligible notes just kept stacking up and he became thinner and thinner.



If Amelia had just stayed at home without touring, it would have been hard for her to watch Jun Hyuk. But since she was away from home for more than 6 months, she just pitied Jun Hyuk as he wasted away. She was also more sorry that she could not be by his side.

Amelia kept the promise she made in the beginning that she would not step foot in Jun Hyuk's studio at home. This meant that while he was in the studio, he was neither a

husband or lover, but a great musician.

And there were many times when she fell asleep with Jina when Jun Hyuk spent the night in his studio.

“Jina.”

“Yes, mom.”

“Will you sing for me before we go to sleep? I sleep well if I hear you sing. Hm... Sing Bellini’s Casta Diva.”

“Mom, you’re supposed to sing the lullaby.”

“You’ll have nightmares if I sing a lullaby.”

Jina buried her head in the pillow and couldn’t stop laughing. Once she finally stopped, she spoke with an embarrassed expression,

“Sorry, mom. I can’t sing. Dad told me not to sing outside of my lessons. I don’t even sing at school. I keep my promises.”

“Can you tell me why?”

“He said my voice is still too weak, that it’ll be ruined if I use it too much. He said I need to build it up slowly...”

“Then how many hours a day do you have lessons?”

“5 hours? 6 hours?”

“What? You sing that much every day?”

“Yes.”

Unbelievable. He is telling her not to abuse her voice but making her practice as much adult vocalists do.

“Isn’t it hard?”

Jina looked regretful and spoke in a strange voice,

“Mom. I want to sing all day. I’m just really sad that I’m only allowed to sing that little in a day.”

“Then what songs do you sing?”

“They’re not songs but sounds. Dad said he hasn’t finished making the music yet. So I’m just making sounds.”

It was hard to believe that he had not been able to finish creating the music. 2 years for him is enough time for him to write 10 symphonies. He would have written hundreds of arias.

“No way. You guys have been practicing for over 2 years. What on earth is he making?”

“He just said that it’s the best music. He said that all of the songs he’s ever written combined won’t be able to follow this one song.”

Jina chatted away excitedly.

“Dad’s first symphony expressed pain, but he said that this one is going to express bliss. This must mean it’s standing opposite to Inferno.”

Amelia bolted up in bed. What is Jun Hyuk trying to do to this young child? To make her feel that pain!

“Did you hear Inferno?”

Amelia asked cautiously and Jina sat up in bed as well.

“Of course.”

“You didn’t feel anything while listening to Inferno?”

“How could I feel nothing? It felt like electricity was running through my body. I never get tired of Inferno no matter how much I listen to it.”

There’s another person. Another person who can enjoy Inferno. Amelia suddenly felt dizzy.

“But what do you mean by 1 song?”

“The song Dad is making now. He said that it’ll be a really long song.”

Amelia couldn’t sleep that night. There were so many questions she wanted to ask Jun Hyuk.

Chapter 279

Amelia dropped Jina off at school and went to Jun Hyuk's studio right away.

When she went in quietly, she wasn't able to move a single step. Other than the path to walk to the basement studio, there were pieces of paper stuck to the floor and all of the walls.

Jun Hyuk must be in the basement because she could not see him anywhere.

When she looked up at the ceiling, it was the same.

"Amelia. What are you doing here?"

She was so surprised that she did not even notice Jun Hyuk had appeared.

"Jun. What... what... on earth..."

When Amelia couldn't even speak properly, Jun Hyuk slightly frowned.

"It's what I'm working on. It's nothing. You don't have to worry about it."

Amelia was about to say something, but stopped. It is a scene that is hard for her to understand, but Jun Hyuk said that it is his work on music. She knows that there is no point in saying anything to him about music.

"Yeah. I came because of something else."

"Something else?"

"It's because of Jina."

"Jina? Why? Did something happen at school?"

When she said Jina, Jun Hyuk jumped in surprise. This was so unbelievable she almost laughed. She realized again that to her husband, she is not there and he only cares about Jina and music.

“No. It’s not school but you.”

“Me?”

Jun Hyuk did not understand and his eyes grew wide.

“Yeah. What on earth are you doing to the kid? Jina’s just 15 years old now. Her body is weak too. How can you make a girl like that sing for 5 or 6 hours everyday when that’s even difficult for adults to handle?”

Jun Hyuk sighed in relief.

“Oh that. It’s okay. Jina’s plenty capable of handling it.”

“What are you talking about? Even if she was born with a great voice, this could ruin her body.”

Amelia’s voice became sharp and Jun Hyuk frowned more.

“Amelia. There’s a world that you don’t know. Don’t make hasty conclusions.”

“I’m not talking about geniuses right now. I’m just saying that it’s difficult physically.”

“Stop.”

Jun Hyuk put up his hand and stopped Amelia from speaking.

“When Mozart created his opera, a 1 person opera was being created in Korea. Thoughts on the song might be different but looking at just the singer, Western vocalists are young kids. The singer of the 1 person opera in Korea performs 3 or 4 hours alone. There are songs that are nearly 8 hours too. The only prop is a fan and the only accompanying instrument is a drum.”

“What, what nonsense.”

Amelia was hearing such an unbelievable thing for the first time. A 1 person opera performing an 8 hour opera?

“It’s true. And I know Jina’s condition best. She’s able to do an 8 hour performance even now.”

The long song that Jina talked about, 1 person opera, and 8 hours. Amelia became scared when she combined these words.

Is the song Jun Hyuk is writing now, one that is over 8 hours long? And does he think of Jina as just an instrument to bring out the music that he wants?

Couldn't it be that he is thinking that it'd be okay to ruin Jina if it means that he could listen to that music even just once?

Amelia ran out of the studio and looked for Yoon Kwang Hun. If what she is imagining is true, she needs to stop it now. And the only person who can stop Jun Hyuk is Yoon Kwang Hun.



When Yoon Kwang Hun went into Jun Hyuk's studio with Amelia, he was speechless.

Pieces of paper stuck everywhere, even to the ceiling. Those papers created a giant maze and notes filled up the maze's pathway.

"Father, what is it? It's so early in the morning."

Jun Hyuk had been laying on the ground and staring at the ceiling when he bolted up.

"I wanted to have a coffee with you."

"I'm a little busy..."

"You don't even have time for a coffee?"

Jun Hyuk flinched under Yoon Kwang Hun's prickly glare.

"Oh, no."

Jun Hyuk looked at Yoon Kwang Hun and Amelia, and made coffee.

"What is that? Are you creating a maze?"

"Yes. I made it like that because I can't organize it."

“With notes inside a maze?”

Yoon Kwang Hun shook his head. It is a world he cannot understand anyway. There is no point in discussing a maze right now.

“You can think of that maze and those notes as the inside of my head. And I need to solve it.”

“Wasn’t it your style to write things out on a piece of paper. Being able to write out the music in your head within moments?”

“You’re right. But that’s not working for this song. I’ve drawn out exactly what’s in my mind through that maze. I need to find a path within that.”

Yoon Kwang Hun took a glance at Amelia and spoke again,

“Are you teaching Jina pansori?”

“What? Pansori?”

“Yeah. Your wife said that it looks like you’re making a 1 person opera that goes for over 8 hours. I realized right away. That’s Chunhyangga.”

Jun Hyuk blinked for a while and suddenly burst out in laughter.

“Amelia. What misunderstanding was there? I don’t know what kind of music is coming out. Look at this maze. The form will come out once I solve this.”

Jun Hyuk gestured to the pieces of paper stuck everywhere.

“Then why are you working Jina so hard? Does 5 to 6 hours make sense for a young girl like that?”

“That’s not it. Jina’s an instrument that exceeds our imaginations. I actually shortened the time because I was worried. If you leave her alone, I’m pretty sure she’ll sing for 24 hours straight.”

Yoon Kwang Hun was silent. It seems Amelia had misunderstood. This is Jun Hyuk as he is. He is just bringing out the music that is inside his head. It is just that this time, it is taking more time.

“Amelia. Father. I don’t know what you’re thinking, but Jina’s my daughter. I don’t do anything that would harm her in any way.”

Amelia seemed reassured as well. Jun Hyuk took a deep breath in and out. And then he spoke slowly and calmly.

“It is true that I’m sensitive because this is hard work for me. And I can’t think of anything beyond this maze. This is music I’ve kept with me my whole life. I can’t say how happy I am that I’m able to make a try at it because of Jina.”

“What? Music you’ve kept with you?”

Amelia’s eyes grew wide.

“It occasionally tangles up like thread... It was music that showed that a little. I was just giving up on it because there isn’t a tool or way to express it anyway.....”

Jun Hyuk grew more excited.

“The music I’ve made until now is just one piece of this thread. I’ve expressed the tangled thread through that maze. I’m anticipating what kind of form it’ll take.”

Yoon Kwang Hun spoke cautiously,

“You’re... you’re okay, right?”

“Yes. Don’t worry. I’m done with more than half now. You know, right? No matter how tangled a thread is, it becomes easier to untangle as you go forward. I’m going to complete it.”

Jun Hyuk squeezed Amelia’s hand.

“Amelia. I’m going to retire completely once this song is complete. And I’ll stick to you 24 hours a day. There’s no need to make more music.”

Amelia and Yoon Kwang Hun jumped in surprise. What retirement all of a sudden?

“Jun, you’re saying you won’t create music? What on earth are you talking about?”

“Because no matter how long I continue making music, there’s never going to be one

better than this. All of me is in this.”

Jun Hyuk smiled brightly at Yoon Kwang Hun.

“When this is all over, I’m going to tag along behind Jina and Amelia like you did and be jobless. I’m living out your life. The only difference is that I have a lot of money? Ha ha.”

Yoon Kwang Hun took Amelia out of the studio.

“Do you think everything Jun is saying is true?”

“Amelia, don’t worry.”

Yoon Kwang Hun pat Amelia’s back.

“He’ll find the music he’s been seeking all his life. That’s an inevident reaction. There was a song you practiced like crazy too, right? Music that you practiced so much even eating seemed like a waste of time?”

“Yes.”

“It’s that. The only difference is time. Jun is just taking a few years. No, for us it’s years but for Jun, it’ll be a short moment.”

Chapter 280

After 5 years passed since Jina was adopted, Jun Hyuk called a few people to JS Center's studio.

He showered, shaved, and appeared at the studio in a clean suit. Next to him, Jina was grown up wearing a white dress and smiling lovingly.

"What is this? It looks like a performance."

Yoon Kwang Hun brought up what everyone else wanted to ask.

Inside the studio, Yoon Kwang Hun, Amelia, Tara, record label Chairman Alex Zenkin, and the senior engineer were staring wide-eyed at Jun Hyuk and Jina.

"I know that you all have been worried about me. And thank you for waiting without saying anything."

Jun Hyuk bowed his head to everyone.

"And Amelia."

Amelia and Jun Hyuk exchanged looks.

"I'm particularly sorry to you. You must have been getting tired of watching me and waiting... I wouldn't have been able to do it. Thank you. And I love you."

Amelia wiped the tears from her eyes and spoke in a low voice.

"Are you all done now?"

"Yeah. Completely."

Everyone relaxed and sighed in relief.

"We're going to record now. Everyone, listen. This is music that holds my everything."

The studio became wrapped in silence. The music he had shown them until now. The single song that holds the essence of those incredible results. The 5 people felt beyond anticipation to thrill at Jun Hyuk's declaration.

The senior engineer broke the silence in the studio.

"Maestro, will you wait for a moment? I need to call in the sound engineers. I can't control it on my own."

"No, it's okay. All you have to do is set Jina's microphone to the piano. Then once you press record, it's done."

The senior engineer ran into the recording booth and started setting up the microphone.

"Father. Tara. I'd like to perform in 1 month, no, as soon as possible. In the large theater of the Isaac Stern Center."

They could finally hear Jun Hyuk's new music. Tara was so happy she felt like she might cry.

"Oh right. It's okay to broadcast live all around the world with a station too. It's a piece that I really want to show off for the first time."

Jina had been silent until now, but smiled as she shouted,

"No, we need to do it. It's a song that the whole world, no, all of humanity, needs to listen to."

"This girl is being so arrogant. She's so confident in herself."

Jun Hyuk tapped Jina's head, but Jina's smile did not go away.

"Dad. This song..."

"Stop. We're going to listen to play it for them now. In front of the people I love most. For the first time."

"Jun, is it just the piano?"

“Yeah. But it’s perfect. It’s enough with just the piano and Jina’s voice.”

Tara had been expecting a magnificent orchestral part and could not hide her disappointment. It is too simple to say that it holds Jun Hyuk’s everything.

Amelia was impressed again that all that is needed is a piano. Even if Jun Hyuk had not done it on purpose, this is music that she can play as well. Her blood as a pianist began to boil.

Jun Hyuk and Jina went into the recording booth and took their positions in front of the microphone and piano.

“You’re ready?”

With Jun Hyuk’s signal, the senior engineer pushed the record button and Jina nodded.

The first powerful note came out at the end of Jun Hyuk’s fingertips on the piano, and a faint melody continued in pianissimo to drag it out. After about 1 minute, Jina started singing in a lovely voice. It was a vocalization without lyrics.

The music had Jun Hyuk’s philosophy that lyrics with meaning force emotions from the listener and limit the imagination.

3 hours passed with an endless sound where they could not tell where she was taking breaths, and Jun Hyuk and Jina were wet with sweat as they breathed shallowly.

Jun Hyuk stood up from the piano, held Jina’s hand, and came out of the recording booth.

“Jina. Shall we go home first to shower?”

“Yeah, Dad. But why is it so quiet? The song must not have been that good. No one is clapping.”

Jina needs to get a sense of everything through sound but looked disappointed when she did not hear admiration, clapping, or praise.

“They’re still not able to come back down from heaven. They’ll come back after the day passes. You did well.”

She cannot see, but she could imagine the state inside the studio from what Jun Hyuk told her. Jina squeezed Jun Hyuk's hand and did not let go.

"Oh right. Hang on."

Jun Hyuk turned off the recording and left a note in the sound control box that they would be going home first.

When Jun Hyuk and Jina left, the 5 people in the studio were crying so much that their shirts were wet.

They did not even know that the song was over and that the two had left, and were just staring at the recording booth.



"Jina. How much time has passed?"

"5 hours."

Jina followed after Jun Hyuk's ability as if she were his biological daughter. There is a precise watch and metronome in her head.

While she does not have his ability to create music, she has her voice. A voice that humans cannot have.

"They should be coming around now, but why aren't they here yet?"

"They must not be coming back because they like heaven."

While Jun Hyuk cut fruit and put it in Jina's mouth to ease their hunger, Amelia snapped out of it at the studio first and tapped Yoon Kwang Hun and Tara on the shoulders.

That is when the other people began to look around.

"Where did they go?"

"I don't know. When did they leave the recording booth?"

“I don’t know. Did they go outside?”

While everyone was finding it difficult to believe that this is reality, the senior engineer went to check on the recording.

A recording file that goes over 3 hours. The engineer finally saw the time and almost shouted.

“Goodness. 9 hours have gone by.”

“What? 9 hours?”

Alex Zenkin looked at his wristwatch and held his head.

“What about the music? When did the music end? Goodness... This... This is music? How could we dare to call this music?”

No one could get a grasp of reality when they heard another sharp yell.

“Shit! I don’t remember. Damn it. Why!”

Everyone realized when Tara yelled. They do not remember a single verse.

Beautiful, holy, trendy, and elegant... No, it was music that they could not describe with the human language, but they do not remember a single bar.

“How... how could this...”

When everyone was devastated and unable to leave the studio, Amelia found the note that Jun Hyuk left behind, and went home alone.

“Jun! Jina! Where are you guys?”

As soon as she came through the front door, Jun Hyuk put his finger to her lips.

“Sh. Jina just fell asleep.”

Jun Hyuk was holding a bundle of scores in his hand.

“I’m sure you were looking for this, not Jina and me?”

Amelia took the scores and kissed Jun Hyuk. Then, she ran to Jun Hyuk's home studio.

After that day, the studio became Amelia's and Jun Hyuk was not allowed inside.



Once Jun Hyuk's new song was announced, headlines of media outlets all over the world were the same.

HE'S BACK.

Jun Hyuk used to release 3 or 4 albums in a month but since he has reappeared with a song for the first time in 5 years, the media would not be more interested if a war had broken out.

They only knew that there would be a performance in 2 months, and it was not yet decided if the performance would continue after that. In addition, their live show through all broadcasting stations showed Jun Hyuk's confidence in the music.

After another week, a detailed introduction to Jun Hyuk's new song came out people could not stop talking.

It used the great word 'God'. However, people were mistaking the god in the title. It is not regarding the song's value, but because it is considered to be configured through music of ancient myths or bible content.

Instead, it was more surprising that the configuration is simply a performance reaching over 3 hours with just a piano and one singer. How will this simple configuration carry out 3 hours?

Jun Hyuk's daughter Jina, who received attention in particular for these 3 hours, is under intense interest for what kind of song she will sing.

New York residents trying to purchase tickets were angry. It was difficult because so many people were trying to purchase tickets, but it was already after hundreds of tickets had disappeared for VIPs.

On top of that, the public was not told who the VIPs are and there was just a warning notice that there will be strict parameters for security and searches upon entry.

Chapter 281

“Jun. We’ll be broadcasting live through ABC, NBC, and CBS. And they’ll be streaming it on the 120 broadcasting stations that they’re contracted with.”

“Tara, tell the people in charge of producers responsible for broadcasting not to bring multiple cameras to edit the film from different views. Tell them to just bring one camera and get a full shot of the stage.”

“What? What is it? Ah!”

Tara quickly nodded. She realized what state the cameramen and producers would be in once the performance began.

The broadcasting stations will not be able to think of delivering different angles, and will need to settle for filming just the music.

“And about the VIP.....”

“Yeah.”

“I sent invitations to a little over 100 orchestra conductors and a little over 100 famous performers. The problem is.....”

Tara look uncomfortable.

“We’re okay up to a few heads of state like the President and Queen Mathilda, but the Queen of England sent an official letter that she has to attend.”

“What? The Queen of England?”

“Yeah. But her age.....”

“Oh, right. Well... this is a problem.”

“Yeah. She could listen to the Song of God and really meet God.”

“What? Meet God? Ha.”

Tara looked at Jun Hyuk as he laughed.

“I’m not joking. It’s a big deal if something happens to her.”

“I know that too. Just make something up. Yeah! Tell her the song is similar to Inferno. That it’s hard to listen to.”

“That’s the best way, right?”

It is music where even a young man cannot snap out of a confused state for several hours. But an old woman over 90?

They need to avoid the dangerous. This is for the relationship between America and England.

With the performance a few days ahead of them, Isaac Stern Center was surrounded by a boundary of police. All of the facilities inside the center had to go through thorough inspection and investigation, and everyone entering needed to pass a search.

Finally on the day of the performance, reporters and broadcast cameras had taken position outside Isaac Stern Center from early in the morning. It is just a performance that was open to the public as well, but a photozone and red carpet had been prepared as if it were a premiere for a Hollywood blockbuster movie.

Fans standing near the red carpet began to take pictures of anyone who walked the carpet, whether they knew the subject or not.

The lucky people with tickets enjoyed the feeling of having become stars as they entered the theater.

After the public entered, maestros, top performers, singers, and stars began to enter with their invitations in hand. They entered the center after making comments about their anticipation for the concert in front of reporters’ microphones.

After, the police and bodyguards appeared to the sound of loud sirens.

The true VIPs including the President of the United States appeared.



Jun Hyuk in a black tuxedo and Jina in a blue dress and sunglasses with a light color, walked onto stage holding hands.

Everyone in the audience stood and clapped. The applause was a tribute to Jun Hyuk's return and their respect for him.

And it also contained their anticipation for today's performance.

Jun Hyuk and Jina bowed toward the audience. Jun Hyuk stood Jina in front of the microphone, squeezed her hand, and sat in front of the piano.

The audience became so silent that they could hear the sound of a pin drop, and a tension reaching explosion enwrapped the theater.

For a very short moment, Jina turned and smiled at Jun Hyuk. Jun Hyuk smiled back and Jina – though she cannot see – must have felt his warm smile.

Jun Hyuk took a deep breath and lifted his hands. At that moment, the audience members held tightly to their arm rests subconsciously. What kind of music will come out the moment those fingers touch the piano? Will they really be able to hear God's melody? It felt as though anticipation, excitement, and tension would explode in the theater.

At that moment, Jun Hyuk brought his fingers down.



When the 3 hour song ended, it felt like time had stopped in the theater. The audience could not move and the cameramen looking at the stage were frozen, unable to turn their cameras off.

This was the same for Commander Akhtar, sitting in the front row.

Jun Hyuk stood from the piano and took Jina's hand.

"Jina. No one realizes that your song is over, but the camera is going. Let's greet the viewers watching TV."

Jina smiled widely and bowed toward the audience. The audience was still frozen in time.

Jina thought of her family sitting in the front row and waved her hand. Since she cannot see, she has no fear of the people looking at her from the audience.

None of her family members were able to react however. Even they who had already heard this song multiple times, were frozen in time.

Jun Hyuk took Jina's hand and left the stage. Backstage, the staff members who had heard the music were frozen and did not even realize that Jun Hyuk and Jina had passed them. The staff members who had not been able to listen to the music could not understand the situation, and were just utterly confused.

"Just leave it. Don't touch the lights and don't open the theater doors. You can just maintain this state so the audience can enjoy the aftertaste fully."

"Yes, Maestro."

The staff members needed to guard the theater according to Jun Hyuk's orders without knowing why.

"But Maestro, are you leaving? What about the curtain call?"

"We can't wait over 5 hours. Just tell them that we waited for a while and left."

The staff needed a lot of time before they could understand what Jun Hyuk had said.

After 5 hours passed, the audience members began to come to their senses one by one and then fell into chaos. Screaming, sighing, and crying filled the theater, and some of them even got down on their knees to recite the Lord's Prayer.

They started shouting for Jun Hyuk and Jina, and then broke out in thunderous applause.

It was already past midnight, but no one left the theater. They kept cheering as though they would spend the night there if they did not get to see Jun Hyuk and Jina.

However, all of the applause went toward an empty stage.

This was the same for viewers who had watched the concert on TV. They were not able to hear the music as vividly as the people who were there had, but that was only a small difference.

That day, the countless people who had watched the performance experienced the magic of disappearing for several hours.

It was a day in which Jun Hyuk and Jina created a miracle.

The next day, people who watched the performance and those who didn't looked up articles first. However, there was no writing on the concert in the morning newspapers or online.

None of the music critics and reporters could remember and no one had the ability to express miracles and magic.

Everyone just shook their heads and kept asking 'how could they dare?'

The only comment could be found in The New York Post, the most innovative and bold press outlet.

They placed the title in large font in the middle of one page, and only left a short note under it in small print.

This short sentence was the only record of the day.

Epilogue

“Find a pianist now. Your mom isn’t your exclusive pianist or anything like that. ”

“You think I perform with mom because I want to? Try being with her 24 hours a day. I’m going to go crazy because of all of her nagging. ”

Jina held Amelia’s hand and trembled.

“What? Nagging? Bring a proper boyfriend, see if I nag. You don’t remember that idiot you brought 2 months ago? The world’s best pianist? That’s laughable. You only date guys like that moron who saw your dad and couldn’t do anything, so how could I not nag?”

“Again... again. What guy in the world is good in front of dad? Oh, right. There are the natives living in the Amazon jungle. They’ve never heard dad’s music and they don’t know who he is. ”

The mother daughter pair walking toward a helicopter kept arguing, but they did not let go of each other’s hands.

Two years ago, Jun Hyuk announced his retirement immediately after the 1st performance of <Song of God>. It was a declaration of complete retirement that he would not release albums, perform, or compose any longer.

However, Jun Hyuk’s declaration of retirement also made Jina’s performance impossible. The best pianists of the time lined up to perform with Jina, but no one could play the song all the way through.



The pianist who played longest was unable to go over 30 minutes. It is because they were unable to control their emotions to continue playing.

The only person other than Jun Hyuk who could play the song all the way through was the dominator of the piano, the piano queen, Amelia.

It also helped that she had listened to Jina's voice for a long time and they practiced together after canceling their performance schedule.

Jina wanted to perform in front of an audience and there was no alternative to Amelia.

Jina, who performed as many as 20 times a month, needed to listen to her mother's nagging all the time.

Until now, Jun Hyuk had followed Jina and Amelia around to their performances. He felt with his entire body what difficult work it had been for someone to be by his side at all times, taking care of him. The 2 women laid out their demanding requests endlessly, and Jun Hyuk had a harder time handling all of that than he did with his performances.

He had not decided to stop following them around because of this though. It had been a happy time to take care of the women he loves.

But the attention went to Jun Hyuk rather than the concerts, and the obsession of the persistent press and fans in particular made it difficult on their private lives and their performances.

There had been a time when they spent an entire day locked up inside of their hotel because the hotel had been encircled by the press and fans.

The way to resolve all of this discomfort was for Jun Hyuk not to go on tour with them, and Jun Hyuk did not stay stubborn either. And today is the first day that the 2 women are going on their own.

Jun Hyuk watched until the helicopter disappeared before going home. The mother and daughter pair would not come back until 3 months later. He needs to spend that time alone until then.

Jun Hyuk sat blankly in a completely empty house, and then picked up the phone.

"Father?"

"Huh? Son, what is it?"

"Amelia and Jina left for their performances today. It's a 3-month tour."

“Really? Then you’ll have to be alone. ”

“Yes. So...”

“Hey, let’s hang up. I’m busy. ”

“No... So I’m telling you to come over. Why don’t you stay with me?”

“I can’t. I told you I’m busy. ”

Yoon Kwang Hun’s annoyed voice grew louder over the phone.

“What are you so busy with?”

“I’m at a fundraising party with the winners of Miss Universe! I don’t have time to play with you. There’s not even enough time to take pictures with all of these pretty women. Hang up. ”

“Hang on. You can come once the party’s over. ”

Jun Hyuk rushed to speak, but all he got was a cold response.

“Ugh, you’re being such a bother. I’m going to keep doing fundraising events with these beautiful women. All around the world for a whole 6 months. Am I crazy to spend that time with you? I’m hanging up. ”

There was only the hang up dial over the phone. Yoon Kwang Hun completely filled the empty space Isaac Stern had left behind. He worked hard on JS Foundation, Stern Corporation, their affiliated companies, and the record label, and brought more power to them than they had before.

The problem was that his behavior was becoming more like Isaac Stern’s as well. He had become lascivious and sly old man.

“Miss Universe... Geez. ”

Jun Hyuk laughed in disbelief. The fact was that he would not see Yoon Kwang Hun for the next 6 months.

Jun Hyuk picked up the phone again.

“Tara?”

“Goodness, Jun. What’s up? It’s been so long. ”

“Um... Amelia and Jina left for their tour. So...”

“Oh, you said you’re not going with them anymore, right?”

“Yeah. Do you want to get dinner or something? With your husband. ”

Tara handed in her resignation when Jun Hyuk announced his retirement. If she can no longer see the miraculous events she had seen with Jun Hyuk, working was meaningless.

And she lived her own life instead of as Jun Hyuk’s shadow. She fell in love, married, and lived comfortably with a tremendous bonus.

“Oh no! I’m on vacation with my husband. We’re in Bali right now. ”

“Oh, really? It’s okay. Have a fun time. ”

Jun Hyuk quickly hung up the phone and called a few people he knew. But his friends are all busy people.

Colin was in the middle of his South American tour, and Danny was working on an album in Europe.

He is the only retired person without a job.

He is the only retired person without a job.

Jun Hyuk went into his room and laid down on the bed. He decided to sleep for a bit and then decide on what to do.

Jun Hyuk had been laying on the bed for about 30 minutes when he bolted up.

This strange feeling. This empty feeling. What could this be?

Jun Hyuk focused on this feeling for a while and then thought of a word he had never considered before.

It is boredom.

A feeling he had never experienced until now. Boredom.

It has been a long time since the endless music in his mind topped. Since he wrote <Song of God>, music no longer pops up in his mind without external stimulus. He became a dried up lake whose ground always shows if it does not rain.

This boredom that feels as though his whole body is completely empty.

He sat up in bed and his eyes sparkled.

‘Boredom? Emptiness? Tediousness?’

Jun Hyuk went to his home studio for the first time in 2 years.

He wiped the dust off of the desk, pulled out the chair, and sat down.

He opened the drawer, took out a single page of sheet music, and picked up a pen.

And he began to look at the blank sheet.



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